

Cabinet Secretary chairs High Level meet with States/UTs on Public Health Response to COVID-19 and Progress of Vaccination

No Room for any Complacency: States/UTs advised to undertake granular analysis of COVID-19 situation and augment Infrastructure, Medicine and Human Resource

Union Health Secretary details essential precautions for upcoming Festive Season and the Strategy to avert any new upsurge

States also guided on control of Serotype-II Dengue in 11 States

Posted On: 18 SEP 2021 3:24PM by PIB Delhi

Cabinet Secretary Shri Rajiv Gauba chaired a high-level meeting to review and discuss the COVID management and response strategy through video conference today, in the presence of Shri Rajesh Bhushan, Union Health Secretary and Dr. V. K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog. It was attended by the Chief Secretaries, Additional Chief Secretaries (Health), Principal Secretaries (Health), Municipal Commissioners, District Collectors and other senior officials of States and UTs.

Congratulating the States/UTs for the landmark achievement of more than 2.5 Cr vaccine doses administered yesterday, Cabinet Secretary complimented healthcare workers, Chief Medical Officers, District Magistrates and State Health Secretaries for their efforts. He hoped that with increased availability of vaccine doses, the pace of vaccination will be maintained.

He however took the occasion to remind the States that there is no room for complacency. He stressed on the need to strictly enforce COVID Appropriate Behaviour (CAB).

Drawing examples from other countries that saw multiple peaks of COVID-19, he expressed concern over certain pockets in the country reporting high test positivity. He advised the State Health administrators to undertake granular analysis of their COVID trajectory, ramp up their Health Infrastructure, undertake stocking of essential medicine and augment Human Resources at the earliest, to meet any potential surge in cases.

The Union Health Secretary highlighted the emerging challenge of Serotype-II Dengue in 11 States which is

associated with more cases and more complications than other forms of the disease. He suggested the States undertake steps like early detection of cases, operationalisation of fever helplines; adequate stocking of testing kits, larvicides and medicines; deployment of Rapid Response teams for prompt investigation and necessary Public Health Action like Fever Survey, Contact Tracing, Vector Control; alerting blood banks for maintaining adequate stocks of blood and blood components, especially platelets. States were requested to also undertake IEC campaigns regarding helplines, methods of vector control, source reduction at homes and symptoms of dengue.

Health Secretary brought to the notice of the States/UTs that 70 Districts in 15 States are a cause of concern as 34 of these districts have positivity exceeding 10% and in 36 districts, the positivity is in the range of 5%-10%. In view of the forthcoming festive season, States were directed to ensure all necessary precautions and effective enforcement for avoidance of mass gathering and congested closed spaces. Existing guidelines regarding malls, local markets, and places of worship are to be strictly followed. States were urged to undertake effective IEC for promotion of COVID Appropriate Behaviour (CAB) and COVID safe festivities. They were advised to closely monitor the case trajectories in all districts on a daily basis to identify early warning signals and ensure imposition of restrictions and adherence to CAB.

The five-fold COVID Containment Strategy (Test, Treat, Track, Vaccinate, CAB adherence): Enhanced **testing** as an aid to early identification, Augmentation of **health infrastructure** to prepare for future (prioritizing rural areas and paediatric cases), **Contact tracing, surveillance and containment measures** and stringent **action in clusters** reporting higher cases, Focus on covering all **priority age groups** with vaccine and continued focus on 2nd dose coverage amongst due beneficiaries and providing sustainable community support as a key to manage COVID-19 were re-emphasized.

It was noted that urgent action on augmentation of hospital infrastructure, Oxygen availability, building up buffer stocks of critical drugs, Ambulance services and implementation of IT systems/ helplines/ telemedicine services is required. Health Secretary stated that funds have been released to all States/ UTs under Emergency COVID Response Package which should be promptly and optimally utilized.

Chief Secretaries were urged to conduct a District-level review and ensure that adequate medical infrastructure and supplies commensurate with the projected requirements are urgently mobilized. Further, private sector capacities may also be duly inventoried and deployed based on the emerging requirements.

To make all possible effort to avert any new upsurge, the State authorities were urged to focus on:

- Ensure compliance of COVID-appropriate behavior and observance of COVID-safe festivities
- Implementing intensive containment and active surveillance in clusters reporting high cases and not delay imposition of restrictions.
- Increased testing while maintaining RT-PCR ratio
- Prompt commissioning of PSA plants, oxygen cylinders, concentrators & ventilators
- Regular reviews for priority implementation of ECRP-II to ensure preparedness with enough headroom
- Monitor infection spread in children considering that few states have opened schools
- Monitor breakthrough infections post vaccination and analyze the emerging evidence
- Monitor mutations including sending sufficient samples for genome sequencing
- Accelerate speed and coverage of vaccination
- Take necessary measures for prevention and control of Dengue and other vector-borne diseases

MV

HFW/ COVID CabSecVC /18th September 2021/4

(Release ID: 1756031)

