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J P Nadda launches new initiatives on Universal Health Coverage Day, 2017

11 December 2017 | News

The goal of achieving universal health coverage (UHC) has become the major focus of health system reform around the world



Universal Health Coverage Day, 2017 was observed in New Delhi today. We are committed to advancing the agenda of Universal Health Coverage in the country, and have rolled out various initiatives to meet this aim. This was stated by Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare at a function.

The goal of achieving universal health coverage (UHC) has become the major focus of health system reform around the world. UHC is about ensuring that everyone has access to the health care they need without suffering financial hardship

S.P. Shukla, MoS (Finance), Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, SEARO; Dr. B D Athani, Special DGHS; Dr. V. K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog; Manoj Jhalani, AS&MD (NHM); Dr. Henk Bekedam, WHO Representative India and Vandana Gurnani, Joint Secretary along with the Health Secretaries and Mission Directors from the States were also present at the function.

The Union Health Minister and MoS (Finance) launched “LaQshya| à¤²à¤?à¥•à¤·à¥•à¤¯” - Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative which is a Safe Delivery Mobile Application for health workers who manage normal and complicated deliveries in the peripheral areas, and also released the Operational Guidelines for Obstetric High Dependency Units (HDUs) and Intensive Care Units (ICUs).

There is enough evidence that supports the fact that improving the quality of care in Labour rooms especially on the day of birth, is central to maternal and neonatal survival. Recognizing this fact, Government of India is launching Laqshya- Labor Room Quality Improvement Initiative.

LaQshya is expected to improve the quality of care that is being provided to the pregnant mother in the Labour Room and Maternity Operation Theatres, thereby preventing the undesirable adverse outcomes associated with childbirth.

This initiative will be implemented in Government Medical Colleges (MCs) besides District Hospitals (DHs), and high delivery load Sub- District Hospitals (SDHs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs). The initiative plans to conduct quality certification of labour rooms and also incentivize facilities achieving the targets outlined. The goal of this initiative is to reduce preventable maternal and new-born mortality, morbidity and stillbirths associated with the care around delivery in Labour room and Maternity OT and ensure respectful maternity care.

Addressing the participants, Nadda stated that, “This year is significant as the National Health Policy 2017 has been approved which envisages the attainment of the highest possible level of health without anyone having to face financial hardship as a consequence. The Government has taken concrete steps to reduce the Out Of Pocket Expenditure (OOPE).”

“We are also focussed on increasing the basket of vaccines. Since 2014, we have launched Rotavirus vaccine, Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV), and the Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine, and also the JE vaccine for adults, Shri Nadda elaborated. The Pradhan Mantri Dialysis Program has also been launched where 1.43 lakhs patients have availed free services from 1,069 Dialysis Units and under Free Drugs and Diagnostics Program; AMRIT outlets nearly 47 Lakh patients have benefitted from AMRIT Pharmacies through purchase of subsidized medicines.”

He also informed the participants that to provide comprehensive primary care, the Government has announced transforming 1.5 lakh sub health centres to Health and Wellness centres. The Ministry is now moving towards provision of comprehensive primary care through the Health and Wellness Centres."

He further stated that in a step towards provision of comprehensive primary care, the Government has initiated universal screening of common NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension and common cancers at the sub-centre and Primary Health Centre.

"This will enable the strengthening of preventive and promotive health, improve patient referral and access to secondary care services. The government has been at the forefront to strengthen the tertiary care and as such six new AIIMS are functioning and sixwill come up in due course", he added.

Reiterating the commitment of the Government towards Universal Health Coverage, S.P. Shukla stated that, "The Government is committed to providing the resources for achieving Universal Health coverage. He further said that the Government has increased the budget of the Health Ministry for 2017-18 by 27.7%. The Government has also through the 14th Finance Commission increased devolution from 32 % to 42% of divisible pool - an increase estimated at Rs. 25 lakh crore over award period to provide States with greater flexibility and autonomy to design, implement and finance schemes."