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Lt Governor approves AAP Government's "Quality Health For All" scheme

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Lt Governor Anil Baijal on Tuesday approved a Delhi government scheme for quality healthcare service for people of the city, without any income criteria.

The scheme was passed by the AAP cabinet on December 12 and subsequently sent to Mr Baijal for approval.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, took to Twitter to announce the development, saying, "Honble @LtGovDelhi approves 'Quality Health for all' scheme without income criteria. Thank u so much sir."

An official from the Lt Governor's office said the approval was given post facto. The "Quality health for all" scheme, applicable to permanent residents of Delhi, pertains to providing patients specified high-end diagnostic (radiological) tests and surgeries free-of-cost at private hospitals in case of delay in government facilities.

Mr Baijal on December 29 had concurred with the amendments to the Delhi Arogya Kosh (DAK) scheme, however, he had advised the government to retain some "income ceiling" so that the resources of the government are used to help the poor and the needy, and the "poor are not crowded out by the well-to-do".

Arvind Kejriwal, reacting to it had said that if the income criteria was introduced, it would practically "kill" the scheme.

Health Minister Satyendar Jain last week had said, that there are needy people and those who may fall above the ceiling limit too are tax-payers, so no one should be restricted from availing the service.

"We cannot differentiate between the poor and rich while providing medicines to them for their wellness," he had said.

The Delhi government, in a statement, later in the evening said, it wants to ensure that people "irrespective of their economic status get best health and education facilities".

"Under the scheme, the government is currently facilitating 52 specified surgeries free-of-cost at private hospitals in Delhi-NCR. There is no income limit for residents of Delhi, who are allotted a date of surgery after 30 days of diagnosis at one of the 24 specified government hospitals in the city to avail the scheme," it said in a statement.

The specified surgeries include heart bypass, cataract surgery and 17 types of kidney operations.

"Besides Aadhaar cards, patients can submit voter identity card or driving licence to avail the services," it added.

So far, "more than 12,000 people" have availed the scheme, on being referred from Delhi government hospitals, mohalla clinics and polyclinics last year, the government said.

Delhi is one of the fastest growing metropolis with a population of more than 16 million, the government said.