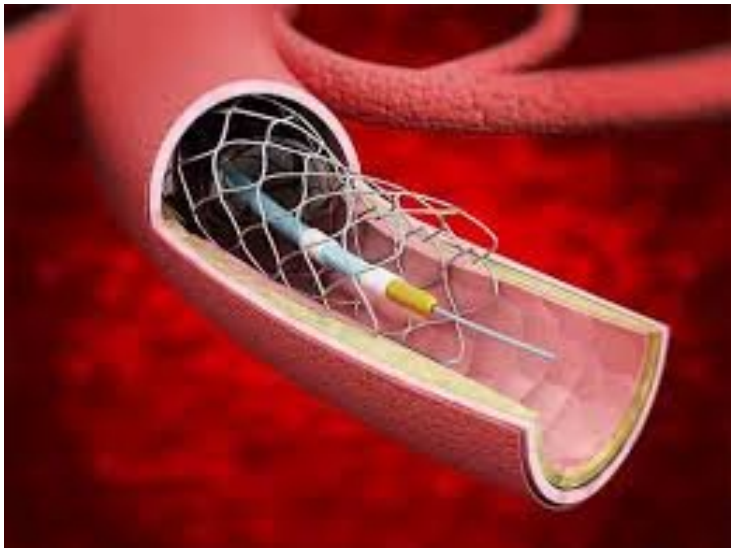
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Provide stents free of cost to BPL group: Health Minister

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The prices of the stents have come down significantly now than what they used to be earlier



Union Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey recently stated that stents used in the treatment for heart ailments would be provided free of cost to all persons below poverty line (BPL).

He also said the prices of the stents have come down significantly now than what they used to be earlier.

On another issue, Choubey was asked about Punjab health minister Brahm Mohindra on Monday refusing to sign the memorandum of understanding (MoU) for 'Ayushman Bharat' on the ground that the Punjab government was already running similar schemes.

The four states and the Union Territory of Chandigarh had inked the MoUs with the Union Health Ministry at an event in Shimla recently for the implementation of 'Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission'.

However, Choubey said, "We are not going to leave any state. We are talking to them (Punjab) and I am hopeful that in coming days it will be solved (they will onboard)."

He further stated that 'Ayushman Bharat' campaign has to be made a people's movement.

The ambitious national health protection mission aims to provide an annual coverage of Rs 5 lakh per family.

The Union minister informed that the Centre had recently launched a TB-free India campaign in a bid to eradicate the disease by 2025.

"We are now moving towards generic medicines. We have opened 3,217 centres under 'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Yojana" Choubey added.

He also said that cancer detection centers at district level were being opened where preliminary screening would be done.

The minister said that while strength of the AIIMS institutes in the country will be increased to 20 by 2022, on the other hand Ayush centres are being opened in the existing AIIMS.

Choubey said the government is committed to bring the healthcare system closer to homes through 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres as part of the 'Ayushman Bharat' programme.

In total Rs. 1200 crore has been allocate to 1.5 lakh centres which we have to change into wellness centres, he said.