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NITI Aayog comes out with a blueprint of the National Health Stack

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According to a consultation paper titled 'National Health Stack Strategy and Approach', the NHS will facilitate collection of comprehensive healthcare data across the country.



The NITI Aayog has come out with a blueprint of the the National Health Stack (NHS), a shared digital healthcare infrastructure, with a view to implement the Centre's flagship scheme Ayushman Bharat and other public healthcare programmes in the country.

The NHS is proposed to be the country's first futuristic nationally shared digital healthcare infrastructure usable by both the Centre and states across public and private sectors.

According to a consultation paper titled 'National Health Stack Strategy and Approach', the NHS will facilitate collection of comprehensive healthcare data across the country.

Subsequent data analysis on NHS will not only allow policy makers to experiment with policies, detect fraud in health insurance, measure outcomes and move towards smart policy making, but also engage market players (NGOs, researchers, watchdog organisations) to innovate and build relevant services and fill the gaps, it added.

As per the consultation paper, the NHS will provide foundational components that will be required across 'Ayushman Bharat' and other health programmes in India.

It will also provide a mechanism through which every user participating in the system can be uniquely identified.

"The registrant may create a virtual health ID to preserve their privacy when interacting with other users or stakeholders in the system," the paper said.

The National Health Policy 2017 had also envisaged creation of a digital health technology ecosystem aimed at developing an integrated health information system that serves the needs of all stakeholders.

As per the proposals, various layers of the NHS will be seamlessly linked to support national health electronic registries, a coverage and claims platform, a federated personal health records framework, a national health analytics platform as well as other horizontal components.

"The stack will embrace health management systems of public health programs and socio-demographic data systems," the paper said.

Once implemented, the NHS will significantly bring down the costs of health protection, converge disparate systems to ensure a cashless and seamlessly integrated experience for the poorest beneficiaries, and promote wellness across the population, it added.

The NHS proposes to allow states to incorporate horizontal and vertical expansion of scheme, avoid duplication of efforts and enable ease of adoption for those without systems or with dysfunctional systems in place, continue using their own state system while integrating with Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission (RSSM) via Application Programming Interface (APIs), making migration simple in case of states with more advanced systems.

The key components of the NHS includes electronic health registries, coverage and claims platform, digital health ID cards, federated personal health records (PHR) framework and the National Health Analytics Framework.

The government's flagship scheme Ayushman Bharat aims to provide a coverage of Rs 5 lakh per family annually and benefit more than 10 crore poor families.

The Aayog further said that in order to arrive at a well-informed conclusion, it has invited comments from all stakeholders on the consultation paper.