

Bret Lee emphasizes on UNHS as health priority

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Brett Lee appealed to the government to mandate Universal Newborn Hearing Screening or UNHS (this has been the core of his campaign for the last four years) spread greater awareness about hearing health.



Former Australian cricket legend Brett Lee was in Bengaluru, taking aim at his new favourite target: the lack of awareness about hearing loss. Brett Lee, Global Hearing Ambassador for Cochlear, the hearing implant maker, has been on this campaign for four years, to raise awareness about hearing loss and its emotional and social impact on individuals, particularly on children.

Brett Lee appealed to the government to mandate Universal Newborn Hearing Screening or UNHS (this has been the core of his campaign for the last four years) spread greater awareness about hearing health. Parents of children with significant hearing loss could intervene early, and the children could go to regular schools and lead normal lives.

Speaking to journalists at the Press Club, Bengaluru, to an audience of the city's leading media, Brett Lee said, "Hearing impairment is the second most common disability in India; yet most people aren't even aware of it," he said. "Infants are not screened for hearing ability (or loss) as a matter of practice, compared to developed countries, where UNHS is mandatory."

Earlier in the day, Brett was at the Command Hospital (Airforce) to witness two new-born infants being tested for hearing part of the UNHS process. He was given a tour of the Command Hospital's facilities, in particular those for new-born hearing screening for infants.

According to the WHO, of the more than 466 million people in the world with significant hearing loss, 34 million are children. If the right measures – such as mandating UNHS - are not undertaken, experts suggest that by 2050, over 900 million people will have profound hearing loss. Yet, most people are unaware of the advanced treatment options available.