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Government is fully funding HIV/AIDS Programme: Anupriya Patel

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NACO has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 16 key Ministries to augment a comprehensive AIDS response.



Government is not only fully funding the HIV/AIDS programme but also increasing the resource envelope in accordance with the programme needs." This was stated by Anupriya Patel, Minister of State (Health & Family Welfare) at a function to mark World AIDS Day, 2018 organised by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, recently in New Delhi. At the function, Anupriya Patel also released the Operational Guidelines on HIV/TB Intervention in Prisons and NACO Calendar for 2019.

Sanjeeva Kumar, AS & DG (NACO), Alok Saxena, JS (NACO), Dr. Billali Camara, Country Coordinator, UNAIDS and Dr. Benk Henkedam, WHO Country Representative to India also graced the occasion.

Speaking at the event, Anupriya Patel informed that the HIV/AIDS Programme has focused on more than one million people from high risk group and kept the infection of HIV in control through comprehensive and intense targeted interventions services. "The Programme has also given attention to eliminating mother to child transmission of HIV and Syphilis by 2020. Under the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan complete ante-natal check up facility is provided to all pregnant women across the country, including HIV testing. In 2017-18 more than 2 Crore HIV testing among pregnant women was undertaken," she added.

Reiterating the commitment to end the epidemic by 2030, Anupriya Patel stated that the National programme has laid a great emphasis on counseling and testing among general clients and NACO has initiated community based screening of HIV to reach first 90 out of the target 90:90:90 by 2020. She further said that with the launch of 'Test and Treat' in 2017, every PLHIV is eligible to be put on ART as soon as he/she is detected HIV positive irrespective of the CD4 count and today 70% of PLHIV who know their HIV status are on ART. "The Viral Load testing for all PLHIV who are on ART has been launched. More than 12 Lakh PLHIV have already benefitted from it. Viral load testing is of immense importance to monitor the effectiveness of treatment of patients taking lifelong Antiretroviral therapy," she mentioned.

The Minister further said that in a historic move, the HIV/AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017 was unanimously passed by the Government and it has also come into force. "This Act provides an enabling environment to HIV affected and infected population where they get a seamless access to services and a comprehensive grievance redressal mechanism with ombudsman at the Centre and Complaints Officer at establishments, she added.

Stressing on the need for multi-faceted and multi-sectoral response, Anupriya Patel stated that NACO has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 16 key Ministries to augment a comprehensive AIDS response. In addition to this NACO has signed MoUs with more than 250 industries of public and private sectors to mobilize their support.

Anupriya Patel also paid tributes to all the lives lost to HIV/AIDS not just in India but globally. The event concluded on the note of renewed commitment to the cause of HIV by the government and each and every partner who have contributed to the successful halting of the HIV epidemic in the country.