

Expectations from Budget 2019- Dr. Manoj Luthra

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Over the last few years, the Indian healthcare sector has begun a major overhaul in order to attain the Prime Ministers goal of healthcare for all. Not only are government institutions involved but corporate and private hospitals have come forward to be a part of the initiative. We expect the government to increase allocation of funds to be able to make a significant change in healthcare delivery to all sections of society. Government needs to focus on increasing the viability of various preventive and treatment programmes. Preventive health programmes can help in early diagnosis and timely treatment and will result in lowering the burden on secondary and tertiary care facilities. More doctors and healthcare staff at various levels will have to be hired to achieve the mission of universal healthcare.

Despite introduction of health insurance schemes, overall coverage and penetration is still low. Government should focus on expanding insurance to middle class along with the lower strata of society to allow access to super specialty healthcare. We

are expecting that medical insurance coverage in the country will be strengthened.

Digital and other advances in technology need to be harnessed through specific budget allocations. High cost of imported medical devices are a challenge and hence, there is need to give incentives to device and medical industry which will not only encourage government's "Make in India" initiative but will also reduce the monetary burden of the patients.