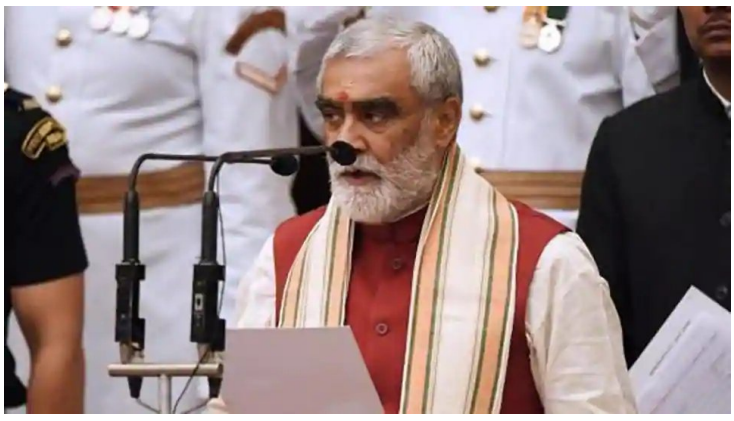
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Ashwini Kumar Choubey chairs 6th meeting of NHM

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The 6th meeting of the Mission Steering Group of the National Health Mission (NHM) was recently chaired by Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare.

Speaking at the meeting, he said, “The Government is rapidly moving forward in providing Comprehensive Primary Health Care through Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs). I am happy to inform that about 8000 HWCs have become operational in 35 states / UTs.”

Dr. V K Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog; Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW) and Manoj Jhalani, AS & MD (NHM), were also present at the meeting along with representatives from Ministries of AYUSH, Tribal Affairs, WCD, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, Urban development, Department of Higher Education, Social Justice and Empowerment and members from the civil society and other experts in the field of healthcare.

“NHM is vital to supporting the states in improving their health systems. Prime Minister’s announcement of the heightened focus on the aspirational districts also provides us with significant leverage point to address long persisting inequities and development lag in these districts. This will be strengthened through NHM”, he added.

It was highlighted that under NHM-Free Drug Service initiative, funds are being provided to states/UTs for provision of free drugs in public health facilities and setting up of IT-backed systems for drug procurement and quality assurance. Currently all 36 states have notified policy to provide essential drugs free of cost in public health facilities. Under NHM Free Diagnostics Service Initiative, substantial funding is provided to States within their resource envelope to provide free essential diagnostic services at public health facilities. The program has been rolled out in States/UTs which are providing free diagnostic Services either in-house or in PPP mode.

The Minister stated that the meeting offered a valuable and useful platform for candid discussion on several issues, and a wider perspective from a wide section of experts which will enable to enhance quality and effectiveness of the NHM. He further added that the suggestions would be taken into consideration to guide the roadmap on interventions to be taken up.

The MSG of the NHM discussed various agenda points including enhancement of reach, outlay and facilities within components of the NHM, Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis, Immunization, Comprehensive Primary Health Care, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Newer Intervention under Revised National TB Control Programme with respect to Patient’s Support and Private Sector Involvement, capacity building of health workers, etc. Many suggestions were also made by the non-official members of the MSG.