

## NHA, QCI to fast track digital certification for hospitals

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National Health Authority (NHA) and Quality Council of India (QCI) has signed an MoU for launching a joint initiative of digital certification for Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) empanelled hospitals. The initiative will help the hospitals to get fast-track certification while enhancing healthcare services.

The partnership aims to create a process to facilitate certification of at least 7,000 empanelled hospitals by December 2021 to build a network of quality healthcare providers. The MoU seeks to put in place a simple, swift, transparent and paperless mechanism to encourage the hospitals to apply for certification.

Following the existing policy of incentivising the accredited hospitals, NHA also plans to incentivise the certified hospitals with higher reimbursement rates so that more hospitals apply for certification. There will be three levels of AB-PMJAY quality certifications: Bronze, Silver and Gold with Gold being the highest level under this initiative.

Speaking about the partnership Dr. Indu Bhushan, CEO AB-PMJAY and NHA said, "There is an urgent need to help hospitals to get certified to improve the quality healthcare ecosystem in the country. NHA, therefore, has decided to collaborate with QCI and use its well-established systems, skills and credibility for hospital certification. This will boost confidence of beneficiaries in the quality of care being provided under the scheme."

Since the treatment rates are fixed and health care providers have been identified, high quality treatment becomes a prime concern of the scheme. The NHA, which is implementing AB-PMJAY, is keeping a watch on the treatment outcomes being achieved by the empanelled hospitals. To ensure quality in healthcare, another accepted way is to monitor at the input level, and certification of the healthcare providers is the right approach for the same.

Hospitals which are already certified by nationally or internationally recognized accreditation body can also avail the benefits of the scheme. NABH's Entry-Level/ NQAS certified hospitals can apply for AB PM-JAY Silver quality certification and hospitals with NABH's Full Accreditation/JCI accreditation can apply for AB PM-JAY Gold quality certification directly. Additionally, AB PM-JAY Bronze quality certified hospitals can apply for Silver and later for Gold after successive time period of six months.

Adil Zainulbhai, Chairman, QCI said, "At every step, QCI will be NHA's partner to achieve the goal of certification of hospitals across India. The joint initiative of NHA and QCI will definitely help the country in achieving the goal of quality healthcare."

The MoU was signed by Dr. Arun Gupta, Executive Director, National Health Authority and Dr. Ravi P. Singh, Secretary General, Quality Council of India.