

## NCRTC collaborates with The EMPATHY Campaign

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**This activity was undertaken as a part of 'Empowering People Against Hepatitis: The EMPATHY Campaign' Project supported by Airports Authority of India (AAI),**



The Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) in association with National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) organised 'I Pledge...(my support)' activity at NCRTC's Corporate Office recently. All the NCRTC employees including the staff and workers availed the benefit of the campaign.

This activity was undertaken as a part of 'Empowering People Against Hepatitis: The EMPATHY Campaign' Project supported by Airports Authority of India (AAI), being implemented by ILBS that aims to spread pan India awareness on the menace of viral hepatitis B & C.

An awareness talk was organized to sensitize and educate staff on various aspects of Hepatitis, followed by a free health camp for screening of Hepatitis B & C along with the vaccination for Hepatitis B. Dr. Neeraj Raizada, Assistant Professor-Epidemiology, and PI (Project Empathy), ILBS and senior officials of NCRTC were present on the occasion.

Dr. Neeraj Raizada, gave the key note address and explained the importance of screening for Hepatitis B & C. He also emphasized on the vaccination against Hepatitis B and encouraged people to get themselves tested and vaccinated for the same.

He said, "Many people are still unaware about the menace of this viral disease, there is an urgent need to act against Hepatitis. We need to generate dialogue and create awareness on this issue to end this epidemic. It is vital to act and get tested in time. We have cost-effective and high impact interventions and vaccinations available to prevent these infections. Need of the hour is community dialogue & action."

To address the problem of Hepatitis B & C, ILBS has undertaken a comprehensive program, namely, "Empowering People Against Hepatitis: The EMPATHY Campaign", conceptualized by Padma Bhushan recipient Dr. Shiv Kumar Sarin, Director, Institute of Liver & Biliary Sciences.

This cause is supported by Airports Authority of India (AAI) under its CSR, to generate awareness on Hepatitis B and C across India through multi-pronged advocacy strategies for improving healthcare seeking behaviour.

The 'I Pledge...(my support)' initiative, a component of the EMPATHY Campaign, focuses on spreading awareness by sensitizing the staff of various organizations and encourage them to pledge their support for spreading awareness about Hepatitis B & C, and to contribute in its prevention and early management.

Following this, all staff also extended their full support by sharing their pledge for the cause. ILBS team conducted a free screening cum vaccination for the employees. They were vaccinated against Hepatitis B and screened for Hepatitis B & C, on voluntary basis.

About 60 million Indians are inflicted with Hepatitis B and C virus infections which are responsible for liver cirrhosis and cancer. Majority harbouring the infection are undiagnosed and unaware of their status. While several initiatives are currently being undertaken by the Govt. under the National Viral Hepatitis Control Program, to improve access to vaccines, diagnostics and treatment for such individuals and those at risk but the stigma and consequent discrimination associated with these infections is a significant hindrance to care-seeking, compliance and mainstreaming, as often the infected do not want to be identified for the fear of social isolation.

This event generated a chain of champions for the cause i.e., 'Ending the Hepatitis B & C epidemic', at NCRTC, each talking to ten, and growing number of people within the organisation and in their society becoming aware of the menace of Hepatitis B and C and pledging to get screened, and treated for hepatitis and to help those infected by supporting them and giving them their due at the workplace and in the society.