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Govt sanctions Rs. 15000 Cr for COVID-19 response package

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Government of India (GoI) has announced significant investments to the tune of Rs.15000 crores for 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package'.

The funds sanctioned will be utilized for immediate COVID-19 Emergency Response (amount of Rs.7774 crores) and rest for medium-term support (1-4 years) to be provided under mission mode approach.

The key objectives of the package include mounting emergency response to slow and limit COVID-19 in India through the development of diagnostics and COVID-19 dedicated treatment facilities, centralized procurement of essential medical equipment and drugs required for treatment of infected patients, strengthen and build resilient National and State health systems to support prevention and preparedness for future disease outbreaks, setting up of laboratories and bolster surveillance activities, bio-security preparedness, pandemic research and proactively engage communities and conduct risk communication activities. These interventions and initiatives would be implemented under the overall umbrella of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The Prime Minister in his address to the Nation on 24th March 2020 highlighted that - "The Central Government has provisioned Rs 15 thousand crore rupees for treating Coronavirus patients and strengthening the medical infrastructure of the country. This will allow for rapidly ramping up the number of Corona testing facilities, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Isolation Beds, ICU beds, ventilators and other essential equipment. Simultaneously, training of medical and paramedical manpower will also be undertaken. I have requested the State Governments to ensure that only healthcare is treated as their first and topmost priority now."

The major share of the expenditure will be used for mounting robust emergency response, strengthening National and State health systems followed by strengthening pandemic research and multi-sector national institutions and platforms for One Health, community engagement and risk communication and implementation, management, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation component. M/o Health & Family Welfare is authorized to re-appropriate resources among components of the package and among the various implementation agencies (National Health Mission, Central Procurement, Railways, Dept of Health Research/ICMR, National Centre for Disease Control) as per the evolving emergent situation.

MoHFW has been playing a lead role in executing the health sector response with containment and control as key response strategies. As on date, a total of 223 labs comprising a network of 157 government & 66 private laboratories are conducting rigorous screening process. Furthermore, MoHFW has already disbursed Rs. 4113 Crore to all the States and UTs for dealing with the emergency COVID response.