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Government to adopt security features in NDHM design

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Implementation of the NDHM started on a pilot basis; expected to scale up soon



Dr Indu Bhushan, CEO, AB-PMJAY and the National Health Authority (NHA), GoI has said that the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) blueprint was developed over the last two years, which aims to provide a unique health id to every citizen and link them together with electronic health records. The aim is to improve transparency in the sector, make health services more accessible, interoperable, and make policy more evidence-based.

Addressing a webinar 'Digital Revolution Going Viral' during the FICCI HEAL 2020 on 1 October, Dr Bhushan said, "The NDHM has citizens at the center of the whole concept and we are adopting privacy and security in the design itself and not as an afterthought."

Drawing a parallel with other government initiatives, Dr Bhushan said that India has gone through the FinTech revolution and the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) that has revolutionized the financial sector and we aim to do the same thing in the health sector through the NDHM. "We will be providing the digital infrastructure and it will revolutionize the health sector," added Dr Bhushan.

Elaborating on the government's digital initiatives, specifically on the telemedicine, Dr Bhushan said, "The excitement regarding telemedicine and digitizing the whole healthcare system stems from the PM himself. The NDHM was one of the major announcements from the ramparts of the Red Fort this Independence Day."

He stated that the implementation of the NDHM has been initiated on a pilot basis. "We are acting on the 'start small, think big and scale fast' principle, and hopefully, in six months you will start seeing the impact on a larger ecosystem," noted Dr Bhushan.

Highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on digital health, Dr Bhushan said that the crisis has spurred some reforms and digital health is one of them. "The crisis showed the fault lines in the health sector. India is investing too little in health and is one of the lowest in the world. This crisis has shown that we need to do much more and we need to invest more in the primary, secondary, and critical care," he emphasized.