

## Healthcare regulator will be armed with powers, govt assures

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As per Dr Harsh Vardhan, union health minister, the government would institutionalise a regulatory authority with full powers to oversee all-round quality standards enforcement and consumer protection under the NHAM.

The health minister in his keynote address at a two-day National Convention on Quality in Public Health on November 04, 2014 at New Delhi stated, "NHAM is going to be the biggest ever health outreach with universal health insurance as a strong component. While quantitatively India will leapfrog into a new era, quality should not be compromised. Quality and quantity are not mutually exclusive,"

Dr Harsh Vardhan disclosed that the expert body headed by Prof. Ranjit Ray Choudhury had recommended that NHAM should be accountable to the people for deficiencies in delivery. That is why principles of consumer protection would come into play. Safety, Effectiveness and Positive Patient Experience would be the key points, the minister pointed out.

He observed, "Why should a government facility be identified with sloth and sloppiness while a private one is identified with reliability? It is time a new culture takes over. I want to make transparency, efficiency, compassion and accountability the pillars of the public health system when NHAM is operationalised next year."

Dr Harsh Vardhan remarked further, "Quality is not something abstract. It is the sum total of professionalism flowing from every branch of service. It cannot be entirely enforced from above, but should spontaneously pour from every pore of the health system. I know there is a killer instinct to excel, so please do it."

The health secretary, Lov Verma, speaking at the Convention, highlighted the critical importance of institutionalising quality assurance in delivering of health service, including the service and technical/clinical quality. The Health Secretary stated that a "Medical Audit", not for punitive action, but for learning from the mistakes and correcting the system, is also need of the hour. In addition, he laid stress on regular monitoring of services through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which may be

reviewed through field visits and review meetings.