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Expectations from Budget 2019- Arindam Haldar

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With Prime Minister promising that the government will more than double its public health spending to 2.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2025 from 1.15% at present, all eyes are on the healthcare sector. The last year has been a challenging one for India's private healthcare providers, with multiple headwinds impacting growth and profitability. The overall sector has become less attractive for investments without which growth gets hindered significantly. Even the existing players are slowing down their capex plans. However, given that more than two-thirds of the sector is driven by private operators, the government has to increase its willingness to partner with the private sector players. The ambitious PMJAY scheme (Ayushman Bharat) holds a lot of promise and has the right intent, but I do hope government authorities take the right partnership approach to broad base participation.

India's fast-growing economy has led to a significant increase in demand for modern healthcare facilities, rise in awareness about diseases, health consciousness among people, increase in per capita income, changing lifestyle and most importantly a transition in disease profile. Now non-communicable diseases like heart disease and diabetes account for as many as 60% of total deaths in the country. Diagnostics companies are the frontline to disease management and have the biggest role to play when it comes to tackling the increasing threat from Non-communicable diseases that the country is facing. An effective PPP model within the wellness outreach where diagnostic test providers can participate effectively will go a long way towards the overall vision of health for all. The fact that these are preventable needs the focus and investment of the government, especially in diagnostics. It is only through better partnerships with the private industry experts that the country can achieve the vision health for all by 2022, the 75th anniversary of independence."