

Overcharging of H1N1 tests by labs

1413. DR. K. V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO:

SHRIMATI BIMLA KASHYAP SOOD:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is considering to declare the outbreak of Swine Flu as an epidemic;
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the steps being taken to check the spread of Swine Flu in States like Telangana and Andhra Pradesh;
- (d) whether the Centre has ensured sufficient stocks of medicines and vaccines to deal with the situation in the affected States;
- (e) whether Government has seen reports that some labs are overcharging for the H1N1 test; and
- (f) if so, what action is proposed to deal with such labs?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA) : (a) and (b) No. Outbreaks have taken place in some States only. Further in these States, the concentration of cases is in some districts or parts of the State.

(c) and (d) Health is a State subject. However, the Central Government has been monitoring the Influenza A H1N1 outbreak situation and remains in regular touch with the affected State Governments including Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The States have been provided guidelines on screening, risk categorization of patients, clinical case management and ventilator management. Guidelines for vaccination of health care workers have been also issued., Central teams of Senior Public Health Specialists from Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry have been deployed to guide and assist the State Governments including Telangana.

The Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme regularly collects data on outbreaks of communicable diseases including Influenza A H1N1 from different parts of the country. This data is monitored and analyzed to facilitate quick response to contain outbreaks. In addition to the guidelines for combating Influenza A H1N1 already provided to the State Governments, the Central Government has also established a network of 21 laboratories equipped to test the virus. The Central Government has assisted the affected State Governments by providing logistic support for drug, masks

and Personal Protective Equipment and vaccines. In particular, the State of Telangana has been provided with diagnostic reagents and viral transport medium.

Emergency stock of Oseltamivir drug, N-95 masks and Personal Protective Equipment is also being maintained. A Committee under the Director General of Health Services periodically monitors the situation. Regular advertisements for guidance of public on Influenza A H1N1 are being issued by MOHFW in national and local newspapers. The advertisements in print media were regularly published in more than 200 newspapers in January and February, 2015 all over the country. These also included vernacular languages. Information dissemination is also through Radio and Television. The affected States have also placed advertisements and conducted media campaign in the local newspapers and aired Radio and Television spots.

(e) and (f) Government was concerned about certain media reports informing that very high rates were being charged by certain private laboratories. The Director General of Health Services has advised the concerned State Government to ensure that the private laboratories do not charge high rates.

Harmful effects of junk food

†1414. SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that junk food causes the maximum harm to health;

(b) whether it is also a fact that only junk foods are available in the canteens of hospitals, schools, colleges and offices; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to stop supply of junk foods in the canteens of these institutions and make people aware towards not eating the junk food?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA) : (a) “Junk Food” has not been defined under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The Government is aware of the reports appearing in the media about the adverse effects of Junk Food. Further, a study conducted by the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Indian Council of Medical Research, Hyderabad on Assessment of ill-effects of consumption of Carbonated Water beverages (CWBs) on health of adolescents and young Adults, showed higher increments of body fat in young consumers.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.