

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 246
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30th NOVEMBER, 2021**

“STRENGTHENING OF MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE COUNTRY”

246 SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI:

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

- (a) whether the second wave of COVID-19 has really exposed the hollowness of existing health infrastructure of the country;
- (b) the major areas in health sector that have been identified which need immediate strengthening by Central and State Governments;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the action Government has taken to strengthen the weak areas which led to a large number of deaths due to COVID 19 in the second wave?

**ANSWER
MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
(DR BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

(a) to (d):

Multiple surges of COVID-19 cases have been noted globally and in other countries including India. Even the most developed countries with matured public health delivery systems have been strained and came under enormous pressure due to increased healthcare demand posed due to COVID-9 pandemic. Union Ministry of Health has coordinated and supported States to upgrade and ensure the health infrastructure and requisite logistics to manage the ongoing battle against COVID-19 pandemic.

Health is a state subject. Government of India is supporting States in their endeavor to manage COVID-19 since the beginning of pandemic. Requisite support is being provided to States/UTs to enhance preparedness and response capacities against COVID-19 and other public health emergencies. Various initiatives have been undertaken by the Government to provide technical guidance and further strengthen health infrastructure, availability of essential logistics including drugs and medical oxygen supply to manage COVID-19.

Some of the major areas for strengthening include healthcare infrastructure, equipping of health facilities with requisite logistic including drugs, oxygen and equipment, strengthening of disease surveillance at points of entry and in the community, enhancement of laboratory capacities, tele-medicine and enhancement of HR capacities.

A few of the interventions are as below:

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare continues to provide technical guidance for managing various aspects of COVID-19. So far more than 150 guidelines/advisories/SoPs/plans have been provided to States/UTs.
- Guidelines on Clinical management of COVID-19 continues to be updated with emerging scientific evidence. The treatment protocol for adults was last updated on 24.05.2021 and has been widely circulated.
- Guidelines for management of COVID-19 in children was issued on 18th June 2021. The guideline covers guidance on management of acute presentation of COVID-19 as well as Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C) in children and adolescents found temporally related to COVID-19.
- Guidelines and checklists on prevention and clinical management of Mucormycosis was disseminated to all States/UTs.
- A Comprehensive Guidelines for Management of Post-Covid Sequelae was issued by MoHFW on 21st October 2021 after expert consultations to guide doctors on post-COVID-19 complications and their management.
- To further provide on-field assistance to the States/UTs, a total of 170 Central multi-disciplinary team comprising of epidemiologists, clinicians, microbiologists and senior officials from the Ministry have been deployed to 33 States/Districts reporting increased trajectory of cases.
- States are supported in terms of supply of logistics which includes PPE Kits, N-95 masks, ventilators and drugs like Hydroxychloroquine, Remdesivir etc.
- States have been supported with supply of oxygen cylinders and oxygen concentrators. States are also being supported in terms of installation of Oxygen concentrator plants/ PSA (Pressure Swing Adsorption plants) plants. All the States have been advised rational use of oxygen and to prohibit the wasteful usage by strict monitoring. States have also been advised to undertake oxygen consumption audit in hospitals including private hospitals and to undertake facility-wise/hospital-wise oxygen inventory mapping and advance planning for timely replenishment so that there is no stock out.
- COVID-19 vaccine is made available free of cost for all citizens of the country aged 18 years and above, irrespective of their socio-economic status, at all Government COVID-19 Vaccination Centres (CVCs). Provisions have been made to improve access for elderly, specially-abled citizens, vaccination of persons in Mental Health Institutions, destitute & vagabonds etc. Under the 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign for improving COVID-19 vaccination rate, various initiatives including community awareness campaigning in collaboration with

local religious and community leaders, CSOs, NGOs, NSS, NYK etc. is being taken to ensure mobilisation and counselling of the eligible population.

Funding support is also being provided to States/UTs through various avenues:

- During the F.Y. 2019-20. funds to the tune of Rs.1113.21 crore was released to the States/UTs under NHM towards management and containment of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Since September 2020, the Union Government has allowed use of State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF) for various COVID-19 related activities.
- During the FY 2020-21, funds to the tune of Rs. 8257.88 crore has been released to the States/UTs towards the India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package. This provided support to States for health infrastructure strengthening, expansion of laboratory network, surveillance and contact tracing, procurement of PPEs, N-95 masks, ventilators etc.
- In addition, 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response & Health System Preparedness Package: Phase-II' has also been approved by the Cabinet with Rs 23,123 crores (with Rs. 15,000 Cr as Central Component & Rs 8,123 Cr as State component) and is being implemented from 1st July 2021. This includes support to State/UT level for ramping up health infrastructure including those in rural, tribal and peri-urban areas closer to the community, providing support for procurement of drugs and diagnostics to enhance service delivery at district and sub district levels for management of COVID-19 cases (including pediatric care) and for maintaining a buffer of drugs, support for IT Interventions such as implementation of Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) and expanding access to tele-consultations in all districts, and support for capacity building and training for all aspects of management of COVID-19.
- Further, PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) with an outlay of Rs. 64,180 crores over 6 years envisages increased investments in public health and other health reforms to safeguard against future resurgences of COVID-19, if any, and future public health emergencies by:
 - Strengthening of Health and Wellness Centers in villages and cities for early detection of diseases
 - Addition of new critical care-related beds at district level hospitals.
 - Operationalization of Regional National Centers for Disease Control (NCDC).
 - Establishment of metropolitan units in urban areas and BSL-III labs across the country to strengthen the laboratory network.
 - Strengthening of existing Viral Diagnostic and Research Labs (VRDLs) and creation of new National institutes of Virology (NIVs) and a National Institute for One Health through ICMR.
 - Strengthening of Public Health Units at international Points of Entry (PoEs)