



Press Note

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The Universal Immunization Programme of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) provides immunization services free of cost to all children across the country as per its Immunization schedule.

There have been reports in a section of media which have highlighted concerns regarding the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI) and the transitioning of the NTAGI Secretariat to the National Institute of Health & Family Welfare (NIHFW) from Immunization Technical Support Unit (ITSU).

NTAGI is the highest advisory body on immunization in the country which consists of independent experts who provide recommendations on vaccines after reviewing data on disease burden, efficacy and cost-effectiveness of vaccines.

The Immunization Technical Support Unit (ITSU) was established to support MoHFW for evidence based planning, program operations, monitoring and evaluation, strategic communication, cold chain and vaccine logistics management and support for Adverse Event Following Immunization. One of the functions of ITSU was to host the NTAGI Secretariat to facilitate the secretarial work of NTAGI which includes coordination of its regular meetings.

In the last few years, many steps have been taken to strengthen NTAGI by providing a Secretariat, establishing a code of practice and now institutionalizing it at the NIHFW. The transitioning of the NTAGI Secretariat from ITSU to NIHFW was a planned activity and is part of the health system strengthening efforts by the Government. This will have no adverse impact on its functioning. There is no financial link of NTAGI with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) or any other organization as the body consists of independent experts.

As far as technical support by ITSU is concerned, it is functioning till 28th February 2017 and the project will continue to support the immunization program in techno-managerial capacity beyond this date. The contours of this support are being finalized with Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and BMGF.

Some media reports have suggested that all health related collaboration with the Gates Foundation with National Health Mission (NHM) has been stopped. This is inaccurate and misleading. BMGF continues to collaborate and support the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

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