



World Health Day, a day of introspection, stock taking, planning and strategizing for the future: J P Nadda

More focused and renewed strategy framed for mental healthcare

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"A day of introspection, stock-taking, planning and strategizing for the future. It is day to think how we can move forward after the goalposts we have already achieved," stated Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare. He was speaking on the occasion of 'World Health Day', here today. The Health Minister stated that the focus should be on pluralism, cross references and sharing of various practices covering geriatric, palliative and rehabilitative care," added Shri Nadda.

Shri Nadda stated that, as part of its renewed strategy for mental healthcare services, the Government is strengthening PHCs and CHCs. He said that extensive training is being provided to ASHAs and ANMs at PHCs and CHCs so that they can become the transformers, translators and change-makers within the community. Government is also aiding States in building their capacities. Shri Nadda pointed that the aim of the Ministry is to ensure implementation of the Mental Health Policy in letter and spirit, and to establish more institutions such as NIMHANS. Focus is also on working with civil society organizations engaged in mental healthcare.

The Health Minister informed that the Ministry is undertaking universal health screening in 100 districts for hypertension, diabetes and breast, cervical and oral cancers. He further said that the Ministry has launched free drugs and diagnostics initiative that will benefit poor people in accessing healthcare. "We will strengthen Public Health Centers (PHCs) and around one lakh subcentres will be transformed into wellness centers, 2500 have already been selected for a pilot," Shri Nadda said.

Shri Nadda said that this is indeed a happy coincidence that the passing of the Mental Healthcare Bill by Lok Sabha is so closely followed by the celebration of the World Health Day with its theme on Depression. "We are witnessing a historic event in the healthcare sector of our country," Shri Nadda said. Highlighting the most progressive features of the Bill, Shri Nadda informed that the provision of advance directive, nominated representative, special clause for women and children related to admission, treatment, sanitation and personal hygiene; restriction on use of Electro-Convulsive Therapy and Psychosurgery are steps in the direction. "Decriminalization of suicide is another significant facet of the Bill, which will ensure proper management of severe stress as a precursor for suicide attempts," Shri Nadda added.

At the function, Shri J P Nadda also launched the Report Book on the Centre for Well Being at NIMHANS, 2nd Edition of ECT administration manual, Psycho-social care kit for the disabled, Yoga and depression, Mental Health Resource Guide for ASHA, Training Manual for Psychologists and Life Skill Education, Stress Management and Suicide Prevention guide. He also launched the Dashboard for Drugs and Vaccines Distribution Management System (DVDMS).

Speaking at the event, Shri Fagga Singh Kulaste, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, said that people with mental health issues need to be mainstreamed in society to help them deal with the issues in a more healthy way.

Smt. Anupriya Patel, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, said that we have the potential within ourselves to fight depression but when it becomes unmanageable we must seek professional help. The Minister informed that according to the WHO estimate depression is the single largest contributor to global disability and it is one of the most common disorders globally. "Depression is multifactorial and every segment of society is affected by this disability, which is worrisome, Smt Anupriya Patel said. She stressed on the importance of connecting, conversing and expressing as integral to beat depression.

Dr Saumya Swaminathan, Secretary (DHR) and DG (ICMR), said that this is an important time for India when Parliament has passed Mental Healthcare Bill, 2016 and the Cabinet has cleared the National Health Policy, 2017. She informed that suicide is a leading cause of death among young people (between 20-40 years of age) in India along with adolescents (15-19 years of age). She said that this needs introspection and added that we need more research and develop centres for mental and neuro disorders.

Dr. Henk Bekedam, WHO Representative to India, said that over the last ten years, depression has increased by 20 percent and depression affects people's social and professional lives and also affects their productivity. He said that although depression is prevalent, there is stigma attached to it and depression and suicide are closely linked. He stressed on the importance of physical activity for children as this helps to prevent depression.

Dr. Jagdish Prasad, Director General of Health Services, Dr. A.K. Panda, Additional Secretary and Mission Director, along with and other senior officers of the Health Ministry, representatives of WHO and other development partners were also present on this occasion.

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