

EXPORTS BEAT FORECASTS TO RISE 7% IN
CUSHION SLOWDOWN IN ECONOMY



Startups bring the doc & hospital home

Healthcare-At-Your-Doorstep A Growing Biz

Rupali Mukherjee | TNN

Mumbai: Healthcare will now be made available right at your doorstep. Startups are using disruptive technologies to pioneer a medical care model to address healthcare needs at the comfort of homes, shifting from the traditional hospital-centric delivery platform. These companies not only provide basic healthcare but also specialty care to those suffering with chronic diseases, especially to a largely untapped elderly population at their homes.

Fuelled by the growing burden of chronic diseases in the country and rising demand for elderly care and post-surgery rehab services, companies like Portea Medical, Healthcare at Home, Medwell and India Home Health Care provide home visits from doctors, nurses and physiotherapists, and offer post-operative, palliative and ICU care.

Home healthcare is an established model in the US, pegged around \$80 billion, while in India it is at a nascent stage, estimated around \$3 billion and growing rapidly. Globally, geriatric care accounts for 70% of home healthcare visits.

The potential for the business is huge given the rise in NRIs, nuclear families, an ageing population and those who work from home. The demographic target for these startups is wide: anyone suffering from a chronic disease or even with a basic healthcare issue in the age group of 45 to 80 years, and older.

"We estimate that roughly 80% of the care that is currently given in the hospital can be delivered in the home setting, with the proper use of technology. Our biggest segments are geriatric care (elder care) and post-operative care (after hospital pro-

cedure care). Besides, we are evaluating to bring in personalized medical devices/wearables to India for personalized monitoring of patients at home," K Ganesh, serial entrepreneur and co-founder of Portea Medical, told TOI.

The rates charged by these companies range from a single everyday service to long-term care packages, and prices vary between geographies and severity of the disease. The charges are

with chronic diseases, and thus supporting the continuum of care to those who generally have very high readmission rates into hospitals. Some of these patients have ailments like heart failure, COPD, chronic arthritis, post-operative surgical site wound management for chronic diabetic patients," said Vishal Bali, chairman and co-founder, Medwell Ventures said.

There is a huge potential for such services, experts

BUSINESS OF HEALTH



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anywhere from Rs 500 a visit for a small service like an injection administration or a wound dressing, Rs 700-1,000 for a doctor visit, Rs 450-650 for a physiotherapist visit, to setting an ICU at home for Rs 7,500 a day, which is almost 50% cost effective than what is being charged in a corporate hospital, the firms claim. Certain firms like Portea and Medwell offer annual subscription packages of Rs 12,000-15,000 too.

Recently, others like CauseforSmile have come up to address the biggest worries of NRIs concerning parents — health, fitness, recreation, as well as social aspects.

Though Portea focuses on mainly basic healthcare needs, others like Medwell Ventures and the Burman family-promoted Health Care at Home will provide specialty home care to patients suffering from chronic ailments.

"Our focus is on providing home health for patients

say. "But the kind of model, market segment and quality of care on offer would be key to be successful in this space," says Ajit Mahadevan, leader, life sciences, Ernst & Young.

Increasingly, mobile telephony, internet and telemedicine is paving the way for innovative treatment and healthcare models, but a majority of the population residing in towns and remote villages does not have access to even basic medical care in the country.

What these startups seem to betting on is the abysmal doctor-patient ratio and low hospital bed density in the country. Besides, "by treating patients at their homes, hospitals can lower costs and become more efficient, and patients also benefit from better health outcomes because they are not exposed to hospital-borne infections," says Zachary Jones, co-founder, Portea Medical said.