

Note on Health and Wellness Centres – Ayushman Bharat

- Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) is essential to avert disease and promote well-being, ensure continuity of care, and enable gate-keeping so as to reduce the burden on secondary and tertiary level facilities, thus saving costs. Statistics reveal that 72% of Out of Pocket expenditure is on Primary Care. Lack of effective primary care leads to fragmentation of services and burdening of secondary and tertiary levels. Comprehensive primary care reduces mortality and morbidity at much lower costs, and significantly reduces the need for secondary and tertiary care. With the epidemiologic transition, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) pose a major threat, with NCDs accounting for 62% of all mortality in adult men and 52% among women.
- In order to expand comprehensive primary care to improve community access, a concept note on strengthening Sub Centres/ Primary Health Centre as Health and Wellness Centres (H&WCs) has been prepared and shared with States. The concept note envisages that the existing government health facilities at the level of the Sub Centre and Primary Health Centre will be strengthened as Health and Wellness Centres (H&WCs). The H&WC would provide Preventive, promotive, rehabilitative and curative care for RMNCH+A, Communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, Ophthalmology, ENT, Dental, Mental, Geriatric care, Palliative care, treatment for acute simple medical conditions and emergency & trauma services. Of these services, several are already being provided through the NHM.
- Operational guidelines for screening of Hypertension, Diabetes and common cancers has been released in June, 2016. The Guidelines provide for population based screening, prevention and control for Common NCDs- Hypertension, Diabetes, and the three common cancers, building on the already existing National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS). 160 districts in the country are at various stages of rolling out Universal screening of NCDs - Hypertension, Diabetes, and the three common cancers – Oral, Cervix and Breast.
- It is also anticipated that the community would begin to use the H&WC as the first point of contact with the Block PHC serving as the first referral point. This would, over time, reduce the burden on secondary and tertiary centres having to provide care for primary health care as well, and also reduce out of pocket expenditures. The suggested team at the H&WC includes a Mid-level Provider who would be a practitioner from the Ayurvedic system or a Nurse, and who would serve as the Team leader. Other members of the team include the ANM, second ANM or MPW (male), and the ASHAs of the area. The Mid-level providers are being trained in a six-month Bridge course that would equip them with primary care and public health competencies. Other interventions include: Family folders and family health cards; to be digitized later, creation of an IT platform - population based analytics, service records, ensuring continuity of care across levels and facilities, and enable monitoring, undertaking a baseline survey to assess morbidity profile and out of pocket expenditures. Salaries of staff would include Performance linked team incentives for achieving specified targets, including quality parameters.

Package of 12 Comprehensive Services

Expanded range of services –

1. Care in pregnancy and child-birth.
2. Neonatal and infant health care services
3. Childhood and adolescent health care services.
4. Family planning, Contraceptive services and Other Reproductive Health Care services
5. Management of Communicable diseases: National Health Programmes
6. Management of Common Communicable Diseases and General Out-patient care for acute simple illnesses and minor ailments
7. Screening and Management of Non-Communicable diseases
8. Screening and Basic management of Mental health ailments
9. Care for Common Ophthalmic and ENT problems
10. Basic Oral health care
11. Geriatric and palliative health care services
12. and Emergency Medical Services