

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4145
TO BE ANSWERED ON 3RD APRIL, 2018**

MEASURES TO ADDRESS SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS IN RURAL AREAS

4145. SHRI HUSAIN DALWAI:

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

- (a) whether more than 600 million people in rural India have little or no access to healthcare due to shortage of doctors, if so, details thereof;
- (b) the number of districts that have shortage of doctors at primary healthcare services, State-wise;
- (c) whether Government is planning to introduce a short term course on modern medicine to train primary care physicians or Licentiate Medical practitioners to address the shortage; and
- (d) if so, details thereof and if not, what other measures Government is planning to take to address this shortage?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a) & (b): As per Rural Health Statistics (RHS) 2016-17 and 2015-16, both Average rural area (Sq. Km) covered by Sub Centre (SC), Primary Health Centre (PHC) and Community Health Centre (CHC) and average radial distance (Km) covered by them had decreased over the year.

Moreover, as per RHS (2016-17), increase in number of health facilities, since implementation of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)/ National Health Mission (NHM) in the country is as per the table given below:

Health Facility	Number of Health Centres	
	RHS 2005	RHS 2016-17
SC	146026	156231
PHC	23236	25650
CHC	3346	5624

Additionally, 1390 Mobile Medical units are also functional in the country to provide services in underserved areas.

As per information provided by Medical Council of India, there are a total 10,41,395 allopathic doctors registered with the State Medical Councils/Medical Council of India as on 31st December, 2017. Assuming 80% availability, it is estimated that around 8.33 lakh doctors may be actually available for active service. Besides, there are 7.63 lakh Ayurveda Unani and Homeopathy (AUH) doctors in the country. Assuming 80% availability, it is estimated that around 6.10 lakh Ayurveda, Unani and Homeopath(AUH) doctors may actually be available for active service and considered together with allopathic doctors, it gives a doctor population ratio of 1:921, whereas WHO norm is 1:1000.

(c) & (d): The government has introduced a number of short term courses to train primary care physicians to address the shortage of service providers. For example, there are short courses to train MBBS doctors to provide life saving Anesthesia to address the shortage of Anesthetists and for Emergency Obstetric care to address the shortage of Obstetricians.

Some of the measures to address the shortage of medical staff include

1. Setting up new Government medical & nursing colleges and increasing annual intake in existing one
2. Extra marks are awarded during PG entrance examinations to those who have worked in rural postings
3. Various financial and non-financial incentives are provided by states to encourage doctors to join and remain with the public health system. These include innovations such as walk-in interviews to reduce delays in engaging doctors; providing them an extra hardship allowance for serving in remote, rural and under-served areas; accommodation arrangements or a housing allowance.

The MoHFW has issued guidance to states on flexible norms for engaging specialists. These include various mechanisms for 'contacting in' and 'contracting out' of specialist services, methods of engaging specialists outside the government system for service delivery at public facilities and the mechanism to include requests for these in the state Program Implementation Plans (PIP).