

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED Q. No 2492
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10th AUGUST 2021**

DECLARATION OF COVID-19 AS OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE

2492 SHRI ABDUL WAHAB:

Will the Minister of **Health and Family Welfare** be pleased to state:

- a) whether Government is considering to declare COVID-19 as an occupational disease and guarantee compensation for workers who contracted the disease in line with the advice of WHO; and
- b) if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

(a) to (b)

Considering the criticality of protecting health, safety and well-being of healthcare workers engaged in management of COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 cases, Union Ministry of Health has issued multiple advisories and undertaken a number of measures. These include:

- i. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provided guideline on Infection Prevention and Control practices to the all states/UTs to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection to healthcare workers. (Available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/National%20Guidelines%20for%20IPC%20in%20HCF%20-%20final%281%29.pdf>). Further, trainings on Infection Prevention and Control have also been made available for all category of healthcare workers on the iGoT platform.
- ii. Guidelines on rational use of PPEs for hospital and community settings (including front line workers) were issued. These guidelines followed a risk-based approach and recommended type of PPE that needs to be used in high and low risk areas. (Available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/GuidelinesonrationaluseofPersonalProtectiveEquipment.pdf> and

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/UpdatedAdditionalguidelinesonrationaluseofPersonalProtectiveEquipmentsettingapproachforHealthfunctionariesworkinginnonCOVID19areas.pdf>).

- iii. The healthcare workers were provided with hydroxychloroquine for prophylaxis and prevention of infection. An advisory to that effect was also issued by MoHFW on 23rd March 2020. (Available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/RevisedadvisoryontheuseofhydroxychloroquineasprophylaxisforSARSCoVID19infection.pdf>)
- iv. State Governments/ UT administrations have been repeatedly urged to ensure that the medical professionals sought to be engaged in Covid related work are suitably vaccinated.
- v. An advisory for managing health care workers working in COVID and Non-COVID areas of the hospital was issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on 18th June, 2020. (Available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/updatedAdvisoryformanagingHealthcareworkersworkinginCOVIDandNonCOVIDareasofthehospital.pdf>).
- vi. Union Ministry of Health on 09th July 2020 issued a Guidance for General Medical and Specialised Mental Health Care Settings addressing the issue of mental health in the times of COVID-19 Pandemic. (Available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/COVID19Final2020ForOnline9July2020.pdf>). The said guideline also addresses the psychological issues among frontline personnel combating COVID-19.
- vii. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in consultation with Department of Personnel Training has also directed State Governments to consider quarantine period of healthcare workers as 'on duty'.
- viii. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare under DM Act, 2005 on 18th June 2020 pursuant to the directions issued by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has directed all States/UTs to ensure that salaries of doctors and healthcare workers doing COVID-19 related duties shall be released on time.
- ix. Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has also issued direction to the Chief Secretary of the States/Union Territories on provision for accommodation facilities for quarantine of healthcare workers. States/UTs were also advised to explore various rostering options.
- x. In the context of COVID-19, the Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 was promulgated on 22nd April 2020. Further this ordinance was brought before the parliament has been passed and notified on 29th September 2020. The amendment provides for safety and security of Health care Service Personnel (HSPs) from acts of violence. States and UTs have been urged to provide requisite safety measures to healthcare workers and health facilities against violence.

- xi. Life insurance benefits are being provided under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP): Insurance Scheme for Health Workers Fighting COVID-19. The scheme provides a comprehensive personal accident cover of Rs. 50 lakhs to healthcare providers, including community health workers and private health workers drafted by the Government for COVID-19 related responsibilities, who may have to be in direct contact and care of COVID-19 patients and who may be at risk of being impacted by it.