

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1218
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.02.2026**

EXPANSION OF PHCS AND CHCS ACROSS UNDERSERVED DISTRICTS

1218. SMT. REKHA SHARMA:

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

- (a) the steps taken to expand Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Community Health Centres (CHCs) and wellness centres across underserved districts;
- (b) whether new specialist posts and diagnostic facilities have been added to strengthen rural healthcare delivery; and
- (c) the manner in which these measures are improving timely access to quality care for all citizens?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a) to (c): The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provides technical and financial support to the States/UTs to strengthen the public healthcare system including expansion of infrastructure and provisions for specialists posts, based on the proposals received in the form of Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs) under National Health Mission. Government of India provides approval for the proposal in the form of Record of Proceedings (RoPs) as per norms & available resources. The details are available in public domain at:

<https://nhm.gov.in/index1.php?lang=1&level=1&sublinkid=1377&lid=744>

As per established norms, in rural areas, an Ayushman Arogya Mandir - Sub Health Centre (SHC-AAM) for a population of 5,000 (in plains) and 3000 (in hilly and tribal areas), an Ayushman Arogya Mandir -Primary Health Centre (AAM- PHCs) for a population of

30,000 (in plains) and 20,000 (in hilly and tribal areas) and Community Health Centre (CHC) for a population of 1,20,000 (in plains) and 80,000 (in hilly and tribal areas) are suggested. Further, District Hospital (DH), Sub- District Hospital (SDH) and First Referral Unit provide secondary care services for rural & urban areas.

This Ministry supports 'Free Diagnostics Service Initiative (FDSI)' programme under NHM with the aim to provide accessible and affordable pathological and radiological diagnostics services closer to the community, which in turn reduces the Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE). Diagnostics services are provided free of cost at all levels of public health facilities (14 tests at Ayushman Arogya Mandir - Sub Health Centre (SHC-AAM), 63 at Ayushman Arogya Mandir -Primary Health Centre (AAM- PHCs), 97 at Community Health Centres, 111 test at Sub District Hospitals and 134 tests at District Hospitals).

In February 2018, the Government of India announced establishment of 1,50,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs), erstwhile Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs), across the country by December 2022. As updated by the States/UTs in AAM portal, a total of 1,82,944 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been established and operationalized as on 31.12.2025, by transforming existing Sub-Health Centres (SHC) and Primary Health Centres (PHC) in rural and urban areas to deliver the expanded range of comprehensive primary healthcare services with complete 12 package of services that includes preventive, promotive, curative, palliative and rehabilitative services which are universal, free, and closer to the community.

Various other initiatives carried out under NHM for improving timely access to quality care for all citizens to the people residing in remote and underserved area of the country are National Ambulance Services (NAS), Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) , ASHAs, 24 x 7 Services and First Referral facilities, Prime Minister's National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP) , Free Diagnostics Service Initiative and Free Drugs Service Initiative, various activities under Reproductive & Child Health, Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (PMTBMBA) and Universal Immunization programme & Telemedicine are also being implemented with NHM support to improve healthcare access particularly in rural areas.

India has recorded substantial improvements in timely access to quality care for all citizens over the past decade. The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) declined from 130 per lakh live births in 2014–16 to 88 per lakh live births in 2021–23 (SRS 2021–23). According to the UN-MMEIG 2023 report, India has achieved an 86% reduction in MMR since 1990, surpassing the global decline of 48%. Similarly, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) decreased from 39 per 1,000 live births in 2014 to 25 per 1,000 live births in 2023 (SRS 2023). The Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) also declined from 45 in 2014 to 29 in 2023 (SRS 2023).
