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

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 313
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 16TH MARCH, 2018
NATIONAL DIGITAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

*313. SHRI A. ANWHAR RAAJHAA:
DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE:

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

(a)   whether the Government has any proposal to set up a National Digital Health Authority for creating frameworks, regulations and guidelines for interoperability and exchange of digital information;

(b) if so, the details including the present status and the salient features of the said Authority along with the time by which the Authority is likely to be set up and start functioning;

(c) the extent to which the digital health platform is likely to benefit the people across the country;

(d) whether the Government proposes to utilize the digital platform to create awareness among the people about healthcare initiatives and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to strengthen the health surveillance system and establish registries for diseases of public health importance?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)

(a) to (e) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) & (b) Yes. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) plans to set up a nodal body in form of "National Digital Health Authority" through an act of parliament as a statutory body for promotion/ adoption of e-Health standards, to enforce privacy & security measures for electronic health data and to regulate storage & exchange of Electronic Health Records.

The Draft Act has been approved for putting it in public domain for inviting comments.

(c) The digital healthcare platform is likely to benefit the people in the several ways such as:

1. Improving Health Literacy
2. Better focus on preventive & promotive healthcare along with curative healthcare
3. Better off- take of healthcare services
4. Improved & efficient delivery of services through online applications viz. health facilities directories, blood bank availability, registration/appointment in hospitals, payment for services, feedback mechanism etc.
5. Ensuring rationalization of treatment and avoidance of duplication of investigation.
6. Aiding improved clinicians' decision-making by providing access to patient health record information when they need it.
7. Reduce frequency of hospital visit & management of chronic diseases.
8. Continuity of care across levels of care and for reaching out to rural and remote areas through Telemedicine and m-Health applications.

9. It also has great scope along with other communication channels like the internet for creation of online clinical and non-clinical learning materials that can transform system of training and distance education.

(d) Yes. National Health Portal set up by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is being used for information dissemination and for creating awareness about various Healthcare initiatives. As of now, broadly the following information (multi-lingual) is available for citizens on the National Health Portal (www.nhp.gov.in):-

i. Health and Diseases - especially current public health alerts.
ii. Directory Services – Hospitals, Blood Banks, Ambulances – according to state / city / PIN Code.
iii. Health programmes of Government

For creating healthcare awareness using Mobile platform, Government has also launched following mHealth applications:

i. Kilkari, an audio-based mobile service, to deliver free, weekly, time-appropriate audio messages about pregnancy, child birth and child care delivery to families' mobile phones.
ii. SMS based Programme for Tobacco Cessation.
iii. A dedicated toll free number with a call centre for reaching unreached TB patients.
iv. Various Mobile applications and widgets have been developed to access the features and facilities of the NHP through mobile phones
v. Various mobile apps were launched recently such as India Fights Dengue mobile app, NHP Swasth Bharat mobile app and NHP Indradhanush Immunization mobile app.
vi. A toll-free number for citizens to access reliable, easy to understand and multilingual health information available on NHP.

(e) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is running Integrated Disease Surveillance Program in all States of the country which is an IT enabled disease surveillance system for epidemic prone diseases to monitor disease trends and to detect and respond to outbreaks in early rising phase through trained Rapid Response Team (RRTs)

Ministry is also taking steps to upgrade this system to strengthen disease surveillance in the country.

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