

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED Q. No 1842
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30th JULY, 2021**

HOARDING AND ILLEGAL SALE OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT DURING COVID-19

**1842 SHRI VINCENT H. PALA:
ADV. ADOOR PRAKASH:
SHRI MOHAMMED FAIZAL P.P.
SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:
SHRI KALYAN BANERJEE:
SHRI T.N. PRATHAPAN:
SHRI BENNY BEHANAN:
DR. AMAR SINGH:
SHRI KUMBAKUDI SUDHAKARAN:
SHRI M. SELVARAJ:
DR. A. CHALLAKUMAR:
SHRI D.K. SURESH:**

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

- (a) whether the Government maintains record of deaths caused by lack of availability of medicines, medical equipment like oxygen cylinders and lack of oxygen in hospital;
- (b) if so, the number of deaths caused by lack of medicines, medical equipment, and lack of oxygen in hospitals from March 1st 2021, to till date, State/UT-wise;
- (c) whether the Government intends to build on such a database, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has ordered an inquiry on such deaths, if so, the details thereof and the outcome thereon; and
- (e) the number of people charged for illegally hoarding and selling medical equipments like oxygen cylinders and medicines between May 1, 2020 and May 31, 2021 along with the corresponding data for the same period in 2019-2020 separately?

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

(a) to (e): Health is a state subject. Detailed guidelines for reporting of COVID-19 deaths have been issued by Union Health Ministry, to all States/UTs. Accordingly, all states/UTs report COVID cases and COVID deaths to Union Health Ministry.

ICMR on 10th May 2020 issued 'Guidance for appropriate recording of COVID-19 related deaths in India' (Available at: https://www.icmr.gov.in/pdf/covid/techdoc/Guidance_appropriate_recording_of_related_deaths_India.pdf). This was widely disseminated among states/UTs.

MoHFW vide letter dated 9th October 2020 has conveyed to States/UTs, WHO and ICMR guidelines on correct recording of COVID-19 related deaths in accordance with globally accepted ICD-10 classification. In addition, the issue of correct and timely reporting of deaths has also been stressed to all States/UTs through multiple video conferences including VCs held on 12th October, 2020; 05th December 2020; 22nd June 2021.

The COVID-19 management toolkit for District Collectors shared by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on 2nd April 2021 with states, highlighted the need for deaths audits and follow up action as one of the key monitoring parameters.

166 Central teams deployed to 33 states/UTs have also reiterated need for correct recording of deaths.

The data on number of deaths are obtained from States/UTs. All states have sometimes also been advised by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that while reconciling the death data at the State level, the number of deaths shall be indicated date wise & district wise.

Although health is a state subject, Government of India has provided the required technical support and has also supported the states through logistic and financial support to further strengthen the existing health infrastructure to tackle COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the ongoing initiatives to further strengthen healthcare infrastructure include:

- With the intent to reduce the risk of cross infection to non-COVID patients as well as to maintain continuity of non-COVID essential health services in the country, a three-tier arrangement of dedicated COVID-19 health facilities [(i) COVID Care Center (CCC); (ii) Dedicated COVID Health Centre (DCHC) and (iii) Dedicated COVID Hospital (DCH)] has been implemented in the country.

- Government of India, to supplement the hospital facilities has roped in tertiary care hospitals under ESIC, Defence, Railways, paramilitary forces, Steel Ministry etc. Further, many large temporary treatment facilities were established by DRDO to manage surge in COVID-19 cases in the country.
- The isolation bed capacity and ICU bed capacity which was only 10,180 and 2,168 before the first lockdown (as on 23rd March 2020) in being enhanced continuously and is currently at 18,21,845 isolation beds and 1,22,035 ICU beds (as on 20th July 2021).
- The daily liquid medical oxygen (LMO) supply, which was about 1292 MTs per day in February 2021 increased to 8593 MTs in April 2021. On 28th May 2021, a total of 10,250 MTs of LMO was allocated to the states. This was done by enhancement of LMO production in steel plants as well as in other LMO plants.
- Restrictions were imposed on industrial use of oxygen.
- A dynamic and transparent framework for allocation of medical oxygen in consultation with States/UTs and all the stakeholders such as relevant Ministries, manufacturers/suppliers of liquid oxygen etc. was prepared.
- Online digital solutions viz. Oxygen Demand Aggregation system (ODAS) and Oxygen Digital Tracking System (ODTS) have been developed to ascertain the demand for medical oxygen from all medical facilities and to track their transportation.
- To avoid wastage of medical oxygen, guidelines on rational use of oxygen were issued on 25th September 2020, and further revised and disseminated to States on 25th April 2021.
- 1,02,400 oxygen cylinders were procured in April and May of 2020 and distributed to States. Further orders for additional 1,27,000 cylinders have been placed on 21.04.2021 (54,000 jumbo cylinders (D type) and 73,000 regular cylinders (B type). Deliveries of the same have started and 53,056 (40,729 B-type and 12,327 D-type) cylinders have been delivered as on 26th July 2021.
- To generate oxygen at the health facility level, PSA plants are being established in each district hospitals, especially in far flung areas enabling the hospitals to become self-sufficient in generation of oxygen for their needs and thereby, reduce the burden on the medical oxygen supply grid across the country.
- Further, to fast-track the availability of Medical Oxygen in rural and peri-urban areas, more than 39,000 Oxygen Concentrators have been allocated to various States.
- A COVID Drugs Management Cell (CDMC) has been set up in the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) to oversee the management of smooth supply of drugs used in COVID-19 management.
- Action is initiated at the National level to augment production of critical drugs including import besides support in terms of equitable distribution of the critical supplies.
- A Drugs Coordination Committee (DCC) has been constituted as an institutional mechanism under Department of Pharmaceuticals for efficient decision making on all the issues with respect to COVID-19 related drugs including availability through inter-departmental consultations.

- Remdesivir is a patented drug, manufactured in India under voluntary licenses granted by Gilead Life Sciences USA (the patent holder) to 7 Indian pharmaceutical companies. Manufacturing capacity was augmented from 38 lakh vials per month in March 2021 to nearly 122 lakh vials per month in June 2021. In addition, 40 additional manufacturing sites were approved by the CDSCO, thus increasing the manufacturing sites from 22 (in March 2021) to 62 (June 2021).
- All States/UT and State Drugs Controllers have been requested to verify stock of the drug and check other malpractices and take effective steps to curb hoarding and black marketing of Remdesivir.
- Department of Pharmaceuticals and the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) have actively coordinated with the industry to enhance availability of Amphotericin B through identification of manufacturers, alternate drugs and expeditious approvals of new manufacturing facilities.
- Besides, the existing five manufacturers, DCGI had issued permissions to manufacturing / marketing of Amphotericin B Liposomal Injection to six additional firms.
- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare continues to provide technical guidance for managing various aspects of COVID-19. So far more than 150 guidelines/advisories/SoPs/plans have been provided to States/UTs.
- Taking note of ingress of COVID-19 pandemic in peri-urban and rural areas, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on 16th May 2021 issued an SOP on COVID-19 Containment & Management in Peri-urban, Rural & Tribal areas.
- Further COVID-19 treatment protocols and advisories both for adults as well as pediatric age groups were issued and widely disseminated to promote rational use of drugs and oxygen.
- Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has requested all States/UTs health officials and licensing authorities through advisories to instruct their enforcement staff to keep strict vigil especially at sensitive places and to take stringent action against any black-marketing by conducting special drives for monitoring and investigation.
- Enforcement actions like seizures, arrests of accused persons / registration of FIR etc. have been carried out by the State Licensing Authorities.