

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED Q. No 3079
TO BE ANSWERED ON 6th AUGUST 2021**

TESTING AND TREATMENT OF COVID-19 FOR THE DEPRIVED SECTIONS

3079 MS. S. JOTHIMANI:

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

- a) the details of policy decisions and initiatives taken by the Union and State Governments to ensure access to testing, treatment and vaccines for COVID-19 with regard to those without ID cards, homeless people, those living in shelters, Below Poverty Line, people with disabilities, sex workers and transgender community;
- b) the outcome of such policy and initiatives; and
- c) the manner in which it has benefited the above categories of people?

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

(a) to (c) 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.

A number of initiatives have been taken by Union Ministry of Health to improve accessibility to COVID-19 testing to cover even the far flung and hilly areas. Starting with just one laboratory for testing of samples for COVID-19, the network of existing laboratories has been expanded vastly to test samples for COVID-19. As of 31st July 2021, a total of 2808 laboratories have been approved for COVID-19 Testing. Besides the Gold Standard RT-PCR (in 1717 labs), TrueNat (in 943 labs), CBNAAT (in 130 labs) techniques and other testing platform (in 18 labs) are also being used for testing. In addition, Rapid Antigen testing is being utilized for point of care testing in containment zones and in hospital settings. Those found positive by this test are

considered as 'true positives'. Those symptomatic found negative should be sequentially tested by RT-PCR.

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 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.

Government of India has roped in tertiary care hospitals under other ministries to supplement the hospital facilities. 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 was also enhanced continuously.

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.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on 16th April 2021 issued a detailed SOP on COVID-19 Containment & Management in Peri-urban, Rural & Tribal areas. The SOP provides for strengthening primary level healthcare infrastructure at all levels to intensify COVID-19 response in peri-urban, rural & tribal areas, while continuing to provide other essential health services through inter-sectoral approach by involving community-based organizations, Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs), Pachayati Raj institutions, Urban Local bodies, etc.

Further COVID-19 treatment protocols and advisories both for adults as well as pediatric age groups were issued and widely disseminated.

Union Government has provided financial support to States/UTs for ramping up Health Infrastructure and support all aspects of management of COVID-19.

- During the F.Y. 2019-20, funds to the tune of Rs.1113.21 crore was released to the States/UTs under NHM.
- In September 2020, the Union Government allowed the states to spend maximum 35% of annual allocation of funds under SDRF for the financial year 2019-20. The ceiling was further enhanced to 50% during the financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22 for containment measures of COVID-19.
- During the FY 2020-21, funds to the tune of Rs.8257.88 crore has been released to the States/UTs towards the India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package.
- In addition, 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response & Health System Preparedness Package: Phase-II' has also been approved by the Cabinet with Rs 23,123 crores (with Rs. 15,000 Cr as Central Component & Rs 8,123 Cr as State component) and is to be

implemented from 1st July 2021 to 31st March 2022. So far Rs. 1827.78 crore has been released to States/UTs in 2021-22 under ECRP Phase-II in FY 2021-22.

It includes support to State/UT level for ramping up Health Infrastructure including those in rural, tribal and peri-urban areas closer to the community, providing support for procurement of drugs and diagnostics to enhance service delivery at district and sub district levels for management of COVID-19 cases (including pediatric care) and for maintaining a buffer of drugs, support for IT Interventions such as implementation of Hospital Management Information System and expanding access to tele-consultations in all districts, and support for capacity building and training for all aspects of management of COVID-19.

COVID-19 testing, and treatment is being provided free of cost to patients in all Government facilities. In addition, Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY health assurance scheme provides health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to over 10.74 crores poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries). Packages for 'Testing for COVID-19' and 'Treatment of COVID-19' were also notified on 4th April 2020. Beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY can avail free treatment of COVID-19 as well as post-COVID related complications including Mucormycosis, etc. under the scheme.

Under the National COVID Vaccination Program, Government of India is procuring vaccines and providing them free of cost to States and UTs. As on 2nd August 2021, a total of about 49.86 crore doses have been supplied to States/UTs from all sources i.e. Government of India's Covid vaccine supply free of cost to all States/UTs, State/UTs and Private Hospitals procured Covid vaccine.

Further, for COVID-19 vaccination additional measures have been taken by Union Ministry of Health to ensure unhindered access to vaccination by eligible population. Some of these measures include:

1. Vaccination of person without prescribed identity cards: In consideration of various groups of people who do not have any ID card/ Aadhaar number or mobile phones, Government of India has formulated an SOP for vaccination of persons without any prescribed identity cards. As per the SOP, facilitated bulk cohort registration would be possible at designated facilities under special vaccination sessions. Such groups of people include nomads (including sadhu/saints from various religions), prison inmates, inmates in Mental Health Institutions, citizens in old Age Homes, road side beggars, people residing in rehabilitation centres/camps and any other identified eligible persons, aged 18 years or more, and not having any of the nine prescribed individual Photo ID Cards (Aadhaar card, Electoral Photo Identity Card- Voter ID, Passport, Driving License, PAN Card, NPR Smart Card, Pension Document with Photograph, Unique Disability Identification Card, Ration card). As reported on CoWIN, as on 2nd August 2021, a total of 4,49,689 doses have been administered to persons without Identity Cards.

2. Near to Home COVID Vaccination Centers (NHCVC) for Elderly & Differently Abled Citizens: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Govt. of India has formulated SOPs related to Near to Home COVID Vaccination Centre (“NHCVC”), which have been communicated to States/ UTs via letter dated 27th May 2021 and also uploaded on MoHFW website.

The NHCVC will be linked to an existing COVID Vaccination Centre (CVC) for planning & execution of the vaccination session. These CVC will be organized especially for this target population (i.e. all individuals above 60 years of age and individuals below 60 years with disability due to physical or medical conditions). For management of any adverse event following immunization (AEFI), an advanced life support/basic life support/transport vehicle must be stationed at the NHCVCs for transport to nearby AEFI management Centre. Further, not only is transport facility and support in this regard envisaged but support in terms of a visit on the next day after vaccination is also contemplated and provided for.

3. In some of the States, special camps are being organized for people in institutional settings (e.g. prisons) for providing COVID-19 vaccination services.

As on 2nd August 2021, a total of 47,22,23,639 first doses of COVID vaccine has been given in the country, while a total of 10,42,29,053 persons have received both doses of the vaccine.