

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3237
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2021**

THALASSAEMIA PATIENTS

3237. SHRI V.K. SREEKANDAN:

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

- a) whether the Government is aware that Thalassaemia patients across the country are facing difficulties to get life saving iron chelation injection due to its shortage;
- b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to improve the supply of such injection and address the shortage;
- c) whether the Government has taken note that there are no medicines for sickle cell anaemia due to which many infant children lost their lives at Attappadi in Palakkad district in Kerala; and
- d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

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

(a) & (b): No such information regarding the Thalassaemia patients across the country facing difficulties to get life-saving iron chelation injection due to its shortage have been reported to this Ministry. Also, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has not received any complaints regarding shortage of the iron chelation injection used for treating thalassaemia from State Drug Controller/Non-Government Organization (NGO)/Individuals.

Further, various drugs containing iron chelating agents are approved for thalassaemia under Drugs & Cosmetic Act 1940 & Rules there under.

(c) & (d): Public Health and Hospitals being a state Subject, the primary responsibility of management of sickle cell anaemia lies with the respective State Governments.

The blood transfusion services comprise of 3500 licensed blood centers across all States and sectors, of which Govt. of India supports 1131 blood centers, by way of equipment (one time), manpower and consumables, including blood bags and testing kits. As per the Guidelines for recovery of processing charge for Blood & Blood Components issued by Department of AIDS Control, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, in February 2014, it is mandatory for all blood banks to provide blood/blood component free

of cost to the patients of Thalassaemia, Haemophilia, sickle cell anaemia and any other blood dyscrasia requiring repeated blood transfusions as a life saving measure. There are two blood centers in the Palakkad district in Kerala, supported by Government of India namely District Hospital, Palakkad and Taluk Head Quarters Hospital, Mannarkkad, Palakkad.

Under National Health Mission (NHM), support is provided to States/Union Territories (UTs) to strengthen their healthcare system including support for management of Thalassaemia and sickle cell anaemia patients at public healthcare facilities, for low income patients, based on the proposals submitted by the States/UTs in their respective Programme Implementation Plan. The details of the Interventions under NHM is annexed.

Details of the Interventions under NHM are as given under:

- Comprehensive Guidelines on Prevention and Control of Hemoglobinopathies in India – Thalassemias, Sickle cell Disease and other variant Haemoglobins (2016) have been developed and shared with the States/UTs. These guidelines provide for screening of every pregnant woman during Ante natal checks, pre-marital counselling at the college level and one time screening for variant anaemia for children in Class VIII, new-born screening as well as prenatal diagnosis. The guidelines emphasize on management of thalassaemia and sickle cell anemia and advise free blood transfusion and **iron chelation drugs to patients.**
- Iron-chelation therapy and Iron chelation drugs for patients.
- To prevent the risk of having an affected child, health education is directed towards school children, the public and health providers.
- Upgradation of Blood banks in district hospitals with facility for component separation, availability of leuko-reduced red blood cells (less than 7 days old).
- Special trainings of technicians of new blood banks for quality assurance.
- Facilitating linkages with Medical colleges for trouble shooting.
- Promotion of regular voluntary blood donation to augment the blood availability.
- Blood collection and transportation vans with dedicated Human resource.
- Day care centers in transfusion and Management Facilities for Thalassaemia Patients.
- Preparation of National registry of Patients taking blood transfusion and identification & development of rare group donor registry for the Thalassaemia Patients at the blood banks through e-raktkosh.
- The Ministry has in collaboration with Coal India Limited, Ministry of Coal is coordinating Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) free of cost for poor Thalassaemic children as a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative.