

Shri J P Nadda Launches National Viral Hepatitis Control Program

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Shri J P Nadda Launches National Viral Hepatitis Control Program**Strongly committed towards eliminating Viral Hepatitis by 2030: J P Nadda**

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“With this initiative, Government is strongly committed to work towards elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030.” This was stated by Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare as he launched the National Viral Hepatitis Control Program to mark the World Hepatitis Day, 2018, here today. At the function, Shri J P Nadda also released the Operational Guidelines for National Viral Hepatitis Control Program, National Laboratory Guidelines for Viral Hepatitis Testing and National Guidelines for Diagnosis and Management of Viral Hepatitis. Shri Manoj Sinha, MoS (Independent Charge), Ministry of Communication also released the Commemorative Stamp at the occasion.

Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey and Smt Anupriya Patel, Ministers of State for Health and Family Welfare along with Smt Preeti Sudan, Secretary (Health), Shri Ananta Narayan Nanda, Secretary, Dept. of Posts and Dr S Venkatesh, DGHS were also present at the launch function.

Addressing the participants, Shri Nadda said that under the guidance of Honorable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi the Ministry is aggressively addressing the preventable diseases. Shri J P Nadda said that there has been a paradigm shift in designing the programme. “Programmes are now designed at the ground level and all stakeholders are taken into the consideration. We are now making sure that the last person gets the benefit out of it,” he said.

Shri Nadda further said that the Ministry has already launched a campaign to end TB by 2025, five years ahead of global target. He said that the Government now has more than 1100 CBNAAT machines for rapid diagnosis of TB and provides daily regimen with fixed dose combinations. He further said that the programme has also initiated active case finding to screen more TB patients.

Shri Nadda stated that the government has also launched the ‘Test and Treat Policy for HIV’ wherein as soon as a person is tested and found to be positive, he will be provided with ART irrespective of his CD count or clinical stage. Adding further, Shri Nadda said that the government has also launched Rotavirus vaccine, Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV), and the Measles-Rubella (MR), Pneumonia vaccine and one thing that was remaining was Hepatitis, today with this launch we will be offering free drugs and diagnostics for hepatitis B & C. “This initiative will provide laboratory testing and management of viral hepatitis with a de-centralized approach,” Shri Nadda said.

Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, said that awareness is a very important component of the program. As disease burden is very significant in India, this will help us to find the disease carriers and towards their diagnosis and treatment. “This exemplifies India’s commitment to providing universal health coverage and meeting SDG targets for the country,” Shri Choubey said.

Speaking at the function, Shri Manoj Sinha stated that the Department of Posts (DoP) has released

several stamps to generate awareness about various programme of the Government. He further informed the participants about various initiatives of DoP.

Smt Anupriya Patel, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare stated that National Viral Control Program marks the beginning of the nation's journey to control viral hepatitis thereby reducing mortality and morbidity attributed to it. "It is envisaged that this program will reach large number of people possibly harbouring the infection, She said. Smt Anupriya Patel further added that integrating the intervention within the existing health systems framework under NHM rather than adopting a vertical approach will further complement our efforts in providing more comprehensive care till the grass root level.

Smt Preeti Sudan, Secretary (Health) said that this initiative marks the achievement of another milestone and symbolizes India's commitment towards elimination of viral hepatitis. She further stated that the programme will find, test and treat viral hepatitis.

MoHFW has launched the 'National Viral Hepatitis Control Program', with the goal of ending viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030 in the country. The aim of the initiative is to reduce morbidity and mortality due to viral hepatitis. The key strategies include preventive and promotive interventions with focus on awareness generation, safe injection practices and socio-cultural practices, sanitation and hygiene, safe drinking water supply, infection control and immunization; co-ordination and collaboration with different Ministries and departments; increasing access to testing and management of viral hepatitis; promoting diagnosis and providing treatment support for patients of hepatitis B & C through standardized testing and management protocols with focus on treatment of hepatitis B and C; building capacities at national, state, district levels and sub-district level up to Primary Health Centres (PHC) and health and wellness centres such that the program can be scaled up till the lowest level of the healthcare facility in a phased manner.

Also present at the event were, Shri Manoj Jhalani, AS & MD (NHM), Dr. Henk Bekedam, WHO representative to India along with the senior officers from the Ministry and the States.

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