

4. Pradhan Mantri Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)

- PM- Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) For the COVID-19 public health challenge, the GOI's response has been pre-emptive, proactive and characterised by a 'whole of government' approach.
- To strengthen the Public Health Infrastructure effectively manage and respond towards any future pandemics and outbreaks, PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PMABHIM) was announced on 1st February 2021.
- The PM-ABHIM is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with some Central Sector Components, for implementation of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Package for health sector in India.
- The objective of the scheme is to fill critical gaps in health infrastructure, surveillance and health research – spanning both the urban and rural areas so that the communities are Atmanirbhar in managing such pandemic/ health crisis.
- **It is the largest Pan-India scheme for public health infrastructure since 2005.**
- Under the scheme, the total financial outlay for the scheme period (2021-22 to 2025-26) is **Rs 64,180 Crore.**
- The mission aims to strengthen the country's healthcare infrastructure at all levels, from primary to tertiary care, to ensure that all citizens have access to quality, affordable, and equitable healthcare services.

Key Components

PM-ABHIM encompasses five key components that address the critical gaps in India's healthcare infrastructure:

Implementation of Central Sector components. The components of the PM-ABHIM scheme are:

Centrally Sponsored Components:

1. Rural Health and Wellness Centres: Under PM-ABHIM, provision is available for necessary infrastructure support for construction of 17,788 building less Sub Health Centres level AB-HWCs in rural areas in 7 High Focus States (Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) and 3 North-eastern States (Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya) cumulatively over a five-year duration from FY 21-22 to FY 25-26.

2. Urban Health and Wellness Centres: Under PM-ABHIM, 11,024 Urban HWCs cumulatively over a five-year duration from FY 21-22 to FY 25-26 are envisaged to be established across all the States & UTs to ensure provision of comprehensive primary health care to the urban population.

3. Block Public Health Units: Under the scheme, it is envisaged to establish 3382 BPHUs in all the Blocks of the 11 EAG States/UTs (Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, UT - Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand) by 2025-26 with the objective to equip the Block level health units to handle public health emergencies and to respond & monitor the healthcare services.

4. Integrated Public Health Labs: An Integrated Public Health Laboratories in all 730 districts will be set-up under the scheme to optimise access to laboratory services, quality assurance efforts, cost-effectiveness, and efficient use of human resources. The objectives of IPHL are to strengthen the infectious and non-infectious disease surveillance system, to provide accurate data for enhancing

timely response for disease outbreak, to provide mentorship to block Public Health Lab and serve as diagnostic hub for block CHC labs (spokes) and to support laboratory investigations of outbreaks.

5. Critical Care Hospital Blocks: Under PM-ABHIM, support is available to establish 602 Critical Care Hospital Blocks (100/75/50-bedded) in all districts with population more than 5 lakhs and with referral linkages in other districts.

Central Sector Components

1. 12 Central Institutions as training and mentoring sites with 150 bedded Critical Care Hospital Blocks;
2. Strengthening of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), 5 New Regional NCDCs and 20 metropolitan health surveillance units;
3. Expansion of the Integrated Health Information Portal to all States/UTs to connect all public health labs;
4. Operationalisation of 17 new Public Health Units and strengthening of 33 existing Public Health Units at Points of Entry, that is at 32 Airports, 11 Seaports and 7 land crossings;
5. Setting up of 15 Health Emergency Operation Centres and 2 container based mobile hospitals; and 6. Setting up of a national institution for One Health, 4 New National Institutes for Virology, a Regional Research Platform for WHO South East Asia Region and 9 Bio- Safety Level III laboratories.

As of November 2023, PM-ABHIM has made significant progress in implementing its key components:

- Establishment of HWCs and U-HWCs: Over 13,000 new HWCs and 2,000 new U-HWCs have been established across the country.
- Strengthening of BPHUs: Over 2,000 new BPHUs have been established in 11 high-focus states.
- Upgrading of Tertiary Care Facilities: Several existing tertiary care facilities have been upgraded and strengthened.
- Establishment of IPHLs: 12 new IPHLs are in various stages of establishment, and 300 existing district laboratories are being upgraded.
- Establishment of CCBs: Over 50 new CCBs have been established, and work on the remaining CCBs is progressing.

Impact in Terms of Spending

- Increased Allocation: The PM-ABHIM has significantly increased the allocation for healthcare infrastructure development. **In the Union Budget 2023-24, ₹1.5 lakh crore (US\$19.5 billion) was allocated for the mission,** demonstrating the government's commitment to strengthening healthcare infrastructure.
- Enhanced Investment: The mission has attracted substantial investments from private and public sectors. The government has been actively encouraging private sector participation to complement public investments and accelerate infrastructure development.

Impact in terms of Facilities

PM-ABHIM is expected to have a transformative impact on India's healthcare landscape:

- **Improved Access to Healthcare:** The expansion of HWCs, U-HWCs, and BPHUs will significantly improve access to healthcare services, particularly in underserved areas.
- **Enhanced Quality of Care:** The strengthening of tertiary care facilities, IPHLs, and CCBs will enhance the quality of healthcare services available to the population.
- **Strengthened Public Health Surveillance:** The establishment of IPHLs will strengthen public health surveillance and preparedness, enabling early detection and response to disease outbreaks.
- **Reduced Financial Burden:** The expanded availability of public healthcare services will reduce the financial burden on patients, particularly those from low-income households.

Conclusion

PM-ABHIM is a comprehensive and ambitious health infrastructure mission that has the potential to transform India's healthcare system. The mission's progress to date is encouraging, and its continued implementation is expected to have a significant and lasting impact on the health and well-being of the Indian population.