



Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

A New Digital platform 'CO-WIN' is being used for COVID-19 Vaccination Delivery



About 30 crore line-listed for COVID-19 vaccination, includes healthcare and frontline workers, prioritized population groups

About 1.54 lakh ANMs working for Universal Immunization Programmes to work as COVID vaccinators, more vaccinators to be arranged in collaboration with states and UTs

A transparent, effective & sustained communication strategy on vaccine safety and effectiveness is crucial for educating people, dispelling doubts: Health Secretary

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While the COVID-19 situation around the world is becoming worrisome, India is seeing a steady and continuous decline in new cases since mid-September. India's Cases Per Million at 7,031 is still amongst the lowest in the world, while the figure of Deaths Per Million at 102 is also amongst the lowest globally. At the same time, case positivity rate is continuously declining and cumulatively stands at 6.5% now. This has been stated by Shri Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in course of a media briefing on the actions taken, preparedness and updates on COVID-19, held at National Media Centre, New Delhi today. The Health Secretary also briefed in detail about the Government's preparation for COVID Vaccination drive. Some vaccine candidates which are in different stages of trial may get licensed in the next few weeks, he further stated.

Speaking about the steps taken by the Union Government for rolling out COVID-19 vaccine, Shri Bhushan said, "When such a huge vaccination drive is taken up, it becomes necessary to have institutional mechanisms at the level of States, Districts and Blocks that will inspect and supervise the entire process. Preparatory activities for roll-out of COVID-19 vaccine being carried by Central Government in collaboration with States/UTs include:

- A new digital platform for COVID 19 Vaccination Delivery called 'CO-WIN' is being used for this purpose. This user friendly mobile app for recording vaccine data is working as a beneficiary management platform having various



modules. In the process of forming database of Healthcare Workers, which is in an advanced stage across all States/UTs, data is presently being uploaded on the Co-WIN platform.

- Line-listing of Prioritized Population Groups for COVID 19 Vaccination. Every single Indian who needs to be vaccinated will be vaccinated. Prioritized Population Groups include about 1 crore Healthcare Workers in both Government and Private Healthcare facilities, About 2 crore Frontline Workers (including personnel from state and central police department, armed forces, home guard, civil defence organizations, disaster management volunteers and municipal workers) and also about 27 crore people in the Prioritized Age Group, which includes those aged above 50 years & those with co-morbidities.
- Strengthening of Cold Chain Infrastructure. Current cold chain system, consisting of 85,634 equipment for storage of vaccine at about 28,947 cold chain points across the country, is capable of storing additional quantity of Covid-19 vaccine required for the first 3 Crore, i.e., Health Care Workers and Front Line Workers. The Health Ministry in consultation with States/UTs has assessed the additional requirement for Cold Chain storage (Walk in Coolers, Walk in Freezers, Deep Freezers, Ice lined refrigerators etc.). Additional supplies would be available to States/UTs beginning December 10, 2020.
- Around 2.39 lakh vaccinators (Auxiliary nurse midwives) across India provide vaccination under Universal Immunization Programmes(UIP). So as not to disturb the ongoing UIPs, only 1.54 lakh ANMs will be used for COVID Vaccination. Additional vaccinators for the purpose are being arranged in collaboration with States/UTs.
- This apart, there has to be a communication strategy on vaccine safety, effectiveness etc. A transparent, effective & sustained communication for COVID vaccination is crucial for educating people and explaining the implementation plan to them. It also will prepare them to accept some adverse effects as happens with all vaccines as well as address doubts and address challenges like disinformation campaigns, rumours and anti-vaccine lobby.

Speaking about the Centre's initiatives, Shri Bhushan mentioned the Vaccine Task Force, which was constituted by the Union Government on April 14, 2020, and is co-chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India and Member (Health), NITI Aayog. With technical experts and representatives of relevant ministries as its members, it provides guidance for focused research on Corona vaccines and other related Science and Technology Issues. The National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID- 19 (NEGVAC) has also been formed in last August to aid and provide guidance on i) prioritization of population groups, ii) procurement and inventory management, iii) vaccine selection, and iv) vaccine delivery and tracking mechanism. The NEGVAC is chaired by Dr. V.K.Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog and co-chaired by the Health Secretary.

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Stating that vaccination efforts of India are guided by the principles which were laid down by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's address to the Nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day this year, the Health Secretary informed about the current stage of the eight vaccine candidates in India. The PM has also personally interacted with and encouraged all vaccine manufacturers and scientists, he added. Five of them, namely Covishield manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, Covaxin manufactured by Bharat Biotech, ZyCoV-D manufactured by Zydus Cadila, Sputnik V which is being manufactured by Dr. Reddy's Laboratories and NVX-CoV2373 which is another vaccine by SII are in various stages of Clinical Trial. Out of these, Covishield and Covaxin have also applied for Emergency Use Authorization. This apart, a Recombinant Protein Antigen based vaccine by Biological E Ltd, mRNA based HGCO 19 vaccine by Genova, Pune; and an Inactivated



rabies vector platform vaccine by Bharat Biotech are in various stages of pre-clinical trial. Vaccine requires 2-3 doses in intervals of 3 to 4 weeks, further informed the Health Secretary. He, however, also cautioned that precautions must be undertaken even after vaccination.



The Health Secretary also informed that maximum active cases are in Maharashtra, followed by Kerala, Karnataka, West Bengal and Delhi. These five states contribute 54% of total active cases in the country.



In reply to a media query, Dr. V.K Paul appealed that we need to show confidence in the vaccine that the health regulator approves or allows. At the same time, he urged all not to fall prey to false news or suspicion.

The presentation made in today's briefing can be accessed here.



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