



Government of India
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

PATHWAYS TO ACCESS

Compilation of summaries of important orders
/circulars/notifications of the Government of India
pertaining to healthcare for persons with disabilities



Pathways to Access (Part III) - Rights of Persons with Disabilities related to Healthcare

List of Abbreviations:

- CGHS: Central Government Health Scheme, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- DEPWD: Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India
- MoHFW: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India
- NHM: National Health Mission, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- O.M.: Office Memorandum
- PWD Act, 1995: Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995
- RPWDA: Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

Framework & Approach:

This resource document provides a collated, summarised understanding and analysis of the law, and the efforts made towards realising the rights and provisions pertaining to the healthcare of persons with disabilities. For context, a brief overview of the relevant provisions of RPWDA, that guarantee healthcare related rights to persons with disabilities, is provided in the section below. Specifically, this compilation contains office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes of MoHFW and DEPWD which have been issued in pursuance to the provisions of the RPWDA. As such, the office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes concern the healthcare of persons with disabilities and cover rights/entitlement/benefits provided to persons with disabilities and their families.

The office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes were included based on their evaluation against the following criteria:

- a) The office memorandum/guideline/programme/scheme of the relevant Ministry/Department/authority details or clarifies the eligibility/scope of a healthcare related right/entitlement/benefit provided to persons with disabilities.
- b) The office memorandum/guideline/programme/scheme of the relevant Ministry/Department/authority has been issued to implement a healthcare related right/entitlement/benefit provided to persons with disabilities.

Only those orders which meet one or both of the aforesaid criteria have been included in the present document.

This document has been prepared in plain English with due care to ensure that their essence is not compromised. The office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes were identified through the website of:

- a) MoHFW (<https://mohfw.gov.in/>)
- b) DEPWD (<https://depwd.gov.in/>)
- c) NHM (<https://nhm.gov.in/>)
- d) CGHS (<http://cghs.gov.in/>)
- e) the National Trust (<https://www.thenationaltrust.gov.in/>)

The particulars of the office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes are provided in the table below, and are hyperlinked for the convenience of the reader, to the document containing that office memorandum/guideline/programme/scheme of the relevant authority. Further, to allow easy navigation for readers interested in knowing the position of law on specific rights, entitlements, benefits, a set of tags for each entry is provided in the fourth column of the database. Appropriate tags have been identified for each entry by taking into account the specific healthcare related right/entitlement/benefit that the office memorandum/guideline/programme/scheme pertains to.

Brief Overview of RPWDA framework on healthcare:

The relevant office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes within this compilation primarily address provisions of the RPWDA related to the healthcare of persons with disabilities. These provisions aim to ensure equality, non-discrimination, and the protection of rights for persons with disabilities with respect to their healthcare.

Necessary Schemes and Programmes (Section 24, RPWDA)

- The appropriate government is responsible for formulating schemes/programmes for establishing community centres which provide access to healthcare, and for provision of aids and appliances, medicine, diagnostic services and corrective surgery free of cost to persons with disabilities (with such income ceiling as may be notified).

Free Healthcare and Other Measures (Section 25, RPWDA)

- The appropriate government and local authorities are required to take necessary measures to provide free healthcare to persons with disabilities, especially in rural areas (subject to the notified threshold for family income).
- The appropriate government and local authorities are responsible for providing barrier-free access and priority in attendance and treatment to persons with disabilities, in Government and private hospitals and other healthcare institutions and centres.

- The appropriate government and local authorities are responsible for promoting healthcare and preventing disabilities through annual child screenings, staff training, public awareness, and education on hygiene and health. The provision emphasizes maternal and child care, healthcare during emergencies, and access to reproductive health services, particularly for women with disabilities.

Rehabilitation Services and Programmes (Sec 27,RPWDA)

- The appropriate government and local authorities are responsible for undertaking rehabilitation initiatives in health, education, and employment, based on their economic capacity and development goals.

Disclaimers:

1. This compilation is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to serve as an official record of any such office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes. If readers wish to obtain any further information about the office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes mentioned in this compilation, they are requested to verify the same from the relevant primary sources.
2. The information contained in this compilation is taken from the websites of the MoHFW, DEPWD, NHM, CGHS, and the National Trust, published and readily available as of 10 November 2024. Further developments concerning the office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes mentioned, as well as office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes which may be dated 10 November 2024 (or a date prior to the said date), but were published on the said website subsequent to 10 November 2024 have not been incorporated in this compilation.
3. Since the RPWDA came into force in April 2017, replacing the PWD Act, 1995, and reflecting India's updated international commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, this compilation includes office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes which were issued between April 2017 and 10 November 2024, and were available as on 10 November 2024. However, exceptions have been made for any orders/circulars/notifications issued prior to April 2017, i.e., during the older regime of the PWD Act, 1995, that remain legally valid and enforceable under the RPWDA.

Compilation of office memorandums/guidelines/programmes/schemes on the healthcare related rights of persons with disabilities

A. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)

The MoHFW is responsible for overseeing public health initiatives, disease prevention, and the regulation of medical education and healthcare institutions in India. The MoHFW plays a vital role in implementing various national health programs, promoting universal healthcare for all.

The MoHFW also oversees the creation of accessible healthcare infrastructure for persons with disabilities. It is also responsible for the training of medical professionals for early identification and prevention of disabilities, and for instituting comprehensive rehabilitation programs, ensuring access to public health services for persons with disabilities.

The flagship schemes and programmes of the MoHFW are:

- 1) [Central Government Health Scheme](#) (CGHS): CGHS provides comprehensive, affordable and accessible medical care to the Central Government employees and pensioners enrolled under the scheme. Beneficiaries are provided outpatient care, hospitalisation, specialist consultations, and laboratory services through a network of wellness centers, polyclinics and empaneled private hospitals across India. It covers rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities and facilitates referral to specialised centres, if required.
- 2) [National Health Mission](#) (NHM): The NHM is a programme in India that aims to provide access to affordable, quality healthcare in rural and urban areas. It covers reproductive and maternal care, neonatal/child/adolescent health, and communicable and non-communicable diseases. It has initiatives aimed at early identification and early intervention for children with birth defects, malnutrition, deficiencies, developmental delays and disabilities.

The following are the orders/schemes/notifications of the MoHFW on healthcare of persons with disabilities:

S.NO.	O.M. No./Scheme	Right/Provision	Tags
1.	Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karvakram	It is an initiative launched by the MoHFW under the NHM, for providing early screening and early intervention services for children (0-18 years), focusing on defects, deficiencies, diseases, and developmental delays (including disabilities). It provides critical support for children with disabilities and their caregivers by providing accessible early healthcare, specifically:	Screening of Children, Early intervention

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Screening at various sites: At birth (delivery points), newborns at home (Accredited Social Health Activists), young children (Anganwadi Centers), and school-age children (government schools). ● District Early Intervention Centers: Children with identified conditions are referred for specialised management, and free treatment is provided for all identified conditions, ensuring that families incur no cost. ● Free Treatment: The programme covers 30 selected health conditions, supporting early diagnosis and management to prevent or minimise disabilities. 	
2.	Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna	<p>This is a publicly funded health insurance scheme which aims to provide health cover up to INR 5,00,000 for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation (in empanelled hospitals), to underprivileged families in India. Persons with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria are entitled to benefits under the scheme.</p> <p>The scheme covers a comprehensive range of medical expenses, including consultations, pre- and post-hospitalization care, diagnostics, intensive care, and follow-up treatment for up to 15 days, with an annual limit of INR 5,00,000 on a family floater basis. There is no cap on family size or member age, and coverage includes pre-existing conditions.</p>	Health Insurance for Underprivileged Families
3.	O.M. No. S.11012/1/2024-EHS , dated 27 June 2024	<p>This O.M. was issued by the MoHFW under the CGHS to outline eligibility requirements of a dependent son with disability of a serving employee or pensioner. A dependent son with disability can be included as an eligible beneficiary on a CGHS card, provided a disability certificate from an authorized medical board is submitted. This applies particularly to sons over 25 years of age. Such dependents of a serving employee or pensioner can secure medical benefits under the CGHS at empanelled hospitals, offering essential support for those who may require specialized or emergency healthcare services.</p> <p>This O.M. also references a previous O.M. F. No. 4-24/96-C&P/CGHS(P)/EHS dated 7 May 2018 issued by the MoHFW, which outlines the eligibility criteria for unmarried dependent sons and broadens the definition of disability to include the categories</p>	CGHS Benefits, Unmarried Dependent Son with Disability

		stipulated under the RPWDA (physical, mental, intellectual, and multiple disabilities). It specifies that an unmarried dependent son, regardless of age, is eligible for CGHS benefits if he has a permanent benchmark disability (40% or more).	
4.	F. No. T.21017/20/2021-NCD.I (NPPCD)/Part dated 4 May 2023	<p>The MoHFW has issued and notified the "Guidelines for Accessibility of Healthcare Facilities and Services for Persons with Disabilities." These guidelines aim to eliminate barriers in healthcare access for persons with disabilities, ensuring compliance with the RPWDA. They mandate that both government and private healthcare institutions provide equitable, dignified, and independent access to services for persons with disabilities. Key highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accessible Infrastructure: Implementation of ramps, elevators, and wheelchair-friendly pathways to facilitate movement within healthcare facilities. ● Adapted Facilities: Provision of accessible toilets and other amenities designed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. ● Specialized Medical Equipment: Availability of height-adjustable examination tables and other equipment tailored for use by persons with disabilities. ● Staff Training: Comprehensive training programs for healthcare staff to enhance sensitivity and awareness regarding disabilities, improving service delivery. <p>These guidelines are crucial for removing physical, informational, and attitudinal barriers, thereby enhancing healthcare accessibility for persons with disabilities.</p>	Accessibility of Healthcare Facilities
5.	Office Memorandum File No: S.11030/86/2022-EHS dated 1 May 2023	<p>This O.M. details the guidelines issued by the MoHFW under CGHS and the Central Services (Medical Attendance) Rules, 1944 to support therapies for persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Specific Learning Disabilities.</p> <p>They provide financial assistance for occupational therapy, speech therapy, and applied behavior analysis therapy to eligible persons with disabilities, with a reimbursement ceiling of INR 400 per session. Beneficiaries can access services at both empanelled and non-empanelled centers, provided the therapists meet specified qualifications. This</p>	Therapies for Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Specific Learning Disabilities

		initiative enhances access to essential therapies, supporting social integration and independence for persons with disabilities.	
6.	O. M. No. S. 14025/10/2002/M dated 26 May 2015	This O.M. issued by the MoHFW revises the ceiling rates on financial assistance for hearing aids and provides that the covered cost of hearing aids includes all taxes and a three year warranty period. It specifies that beneficiaries under CGHS are eligible to obtain hearing aids if they are referred to a CGHS/Government hospital Ear-Nose-Throat Specialist from a parent CGHS wellness centre.	Access to Hearing Aids

B. Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD)

The DEPWD promotes equitable and accessible healthcare for persons with disabilities in India through comprehensive schemes and programmes, covering rehabilitation, health insurance, assistive services, and capacity building.

S.No.	O.M./Order No.	Right/Provision	Tags
1.	Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme (Revised Guidelines w.e.f. 1 October 2024)	The Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme offers financial assistance to voluntary organizations to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, including early intervention, development of daily living skills, education and training. Model projects considered for financial assistance under this scheme include early intervention and therapy for young children to support developmental milestones, half-way homes for mental health rehabilitation and projects based on providing assistive devices and therapy equipment to persons with disabilities.	Rehabilitation, Financial Assistance to Voluntary Organisations
2.	Niramaya Health Insurance Scheme	The Niramaya Health Insurance Scheme, launched by the DEPWD, provides affordable health insurance for persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities. It offers up to INR 1,00,000 annually, covering essential health-related needs, including outpatient treatments, preventive and routine care, surgical and non-surgical interventions, rehabilitation therapies, alternative medicine and ancillary travel costs.	Health Insurance for Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental

		Persons with disabilities who have at least one of the disabilities covered under the National Trust Act, 1999 with a valid disability certificate are eligible for insurance coverage. This scheme promotes equitable healthcare access, helping persons with disabilities manage their health needs affordably.	Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities
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