

Cabinet approves major expansion of postgraduate and undergraduate medical education capacity in the country

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The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the Phase-III of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for strengthening and upgradation of existing State Government/ Central Government Medical Colleges/ Standalone PG Institutes/ Government Hospitals for increasing 5,000 PG seats and extension of the CSS for upgradation of existing government medical colleges for increasing 5,023 MBBS seats with an enhanced cost ceiling of Rs. 1.50 crore per seat. This initiative will significantly: augment the undergraduate medical capacity; availability of specialist doctors by creating additional postgraduate seats; and enable introduction of new specialties across Government medical institutions. This will strengthen the overall availability of doctors in the country.

The total financial implications of these two schemes is Rs.15,034.50 crore for a period from 2025-26 to 2028-29. Out of Rs.15034.50 crore, the central share is Rs.10,303.20 crore and the state share is Rs.4731.30 crore.

Benefits:

Schemes for augmenting medical seats in government medical colleges/institutions across State/UTs will help augment the availability of doctors and specialists in the country, thereby improving access to quality healthcare, especially in underserved areas. It will also leverage existing infrastructure for cost-effective expansion of tertiary healthcare in the Government institutions as expansion of postgraduate seats ensures a steady supply of specialists in critical disciplines. These schemes aim to promote balanced regional distribution of healthcare resources, while being cost-effective by leveraging existing infrastructure. In the long run, they strengthen the country's health systems to meet existing and emerging health needs.

Impact, including employment generation:

The major output/outcome expected from the schemes are:

- i. Providing more opportunities to the students to pursue medical education in India.
- ii. Enhancing the quality of medical education and training to meet global standards.
- iii. Adequate availability of doctors and specialists can position India as a prime destination for providing affordable healthcare and thus boosting foreign exchange.
- iv. Bridging the gap in healthcare accessibility, particularly in underserved rural and remote areas.
- v. Generating of direct and indirect employment opportunities in terms of doctors, faculty, paramedical staff, researchers, administrators and support services.
- vi. Strengthening the health system's resilience and contributing to overall socio- economic development.
- vii. Promoting equitable distribution of healthcare infrastructure across States/UTs.

Implementation Strategy and targets:

The target of these schemes is to increase 5000 PG seats and 5023 UG seats in government institutions by 2028-2029. Detailed guidelines will be issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW) for implementation of the schemes.

Background:

Realizing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for 1.4 billion people critically depends on building a robust healthcare system capable of delivering timely, high-standard services at all levels—particularly in rural, tribal, and hard-to-reach communities. A robust healthcare system hinges on availability of skilled and adequate workforce.

India's healthcare education and workforce infrastructure has witnessed significant growth in recent years, reflecting a sustained policy focus on expanding access and improving quality. As on date, India has 808 medical colleges, highest amongst the world with total intake capacity of 1,23,700 MBBS seats. In the last one decade, added over 69,352 new MBBS seats registering a growth of 127%. Similarly, during this period 43,041 PG seats were added showing an impressive growth of 143%. In spite of this notable growth in number of medical seats, in certain regions there is a need to enhance capacities to match the demand, access and affordability of healthcare.

Further, the twenty-two new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) approved under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) apart from providing tertiary healthcare services are also playing an important role in building a pool of health professionals with highest standards of medical competence with their state-of-the-art teaching learning facilities.

To expand the pool of qualified faculty, new Medical Institution (Qualifications of Faculty) Regulations 2025 have been issued by adopting a more inclusive and competency-based approach to faculty eligibility and recruitment. These changes aim to address the growing requirement of teaching personnel, and meeting the academic and professional standards.

To augment the availability of qualified human resource in health, MoH&FW is administering these schemes and their further extension underscores the Government's commitment of creating capacity for production of more medical professionals, strengthening human resources for health, and improving access to quality healthcare services for the people of India.

MJPS/SKS

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