BioSpectrum
the business of Bi
24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

World Health Day 2018: Universal Health Care for all

06 April 2018 | Features | By Vishal Bali

The World Health Organisation has designated the theme for 2018â??s World Health Day to be â??Everyone, Everywhereâ??, an indication that nations around the world are aspiring to provide higher accessibility of healthcare to their citizens.

Universal Health Care has become a fundamental principle guiding much of Public Policy and Healthcare Services in countries around the world. The basic premise of this construct is to alleviate the financial costs associated with healthcare while increasing individual access to these services. The World Health Organisation has designated the theme for 2018's World Health Day to be 'Everyone, Everywhere', an indication that nations around the world are aspiring to provide higher accessibility of healthcare to their citizens. Time is therefore right for stakeholders in the public and private healthcare delivery systems and the medical education ecosystem to collaborate and drive the agenda of universal healthcare coverage for India.

The Government seems to have given the principle a tacit approval, as demonstrated by the impetus placed on Public Healthcare in the 2018 Budget. Upon implementation, India is set to have the world's largest public health care programme that would cater to half a billion of its citizens. Modicare has lofty goals to fulfill as it aims to ensure that nearly 10 crore vulnerable families would be entitled to coverage of up to Rs 5 Lakhs a year. India is amongst the group of countries with the lowest proportions allocated to healthcare globally. This policy would help ensure a minimum standard of coverage offered to citizens, improving accessibility and health outcomes for the masses. Apart from this, there are indications of a New Pharmaceutical Policy that is likely to be introduced that would run in tandem to help ensure the effective implementation of the Modicare plan.

While a change in public policy and discourse is one end of the spectrum that governs Universal Healthcare, it's effective implementation is governed by stakeholders in the Healthcare Industry. For a country where public healthcare spending has traditionally been less than 1% of its GDP, private healthcare delivery has taken monumental strides to improve accessibility and delivery of healthcare services in the country. The start up ecosystem in healthcare which has contributed to the rise in use of digital technologies in various facets of healthcare has also played an important role in the market. Right from the use of health applications by consumers, data mining and analytics for personalized service offerings, digitization of health information and records, or even leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) for a varied array of functions specific to the industry, the

trends in healthcare seem to move towards improving access, delivery and personalisation. The diagnostics industry is similarly transforming disease detection with innovative technologies. Another important trend seen is a rise in the adoption of Home Health Services, where access to quality healthcare is not limited to institutions like hospitals; instead, it can be delivered to the patients' doorstep. This would make it easy for individuals to access Clinical and Non- Clinical Care despite time, distance, monetary and other restrictions.

All these changes happening in the industry will collectively contribute to the idea of Universal healthcare in India. When these trends are analyzed cohesively, they leave us with the impression that the consumer with various new technologies at their disposal will define the movement of Universal Healthcare. This is a promising sign for the future and hopefully will lead towards a healthier country.

-Vishal Bali, Co-founder and Chairman, Medwell Ventures