

Delhi conducts 1st Edition of Ayushman Bharat Conclave

01 March 2019 | News

The conclave is an initiative of a leading industry forum the India Health & Wellness Summit



1st Edition of Ayushman Bharat conclave happened in New Delhi recently. The mega conclave was held in on a day when India's universal healthcare coverage program completes 157th day since launched.

While speaking at the 1st edition of the Ayushman Bharat Conclave Dr. Indu Bhushan, CEO, National Health Authority said, "India's ambitious healthcare coverage scheme Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) has already covered 13.5 lakh hospitalizations worth Rs 18000 crore, effectively allowing one hospitalization every five seconds."

Providing the figures in the opening address at the maiden edition of Ayushman Bharat Conclave held here today, Dr. Bhushan said, "Every year, 6 crore people fall below poverty line due to catastrophic health expenditure. Besides, 40 per cent of the poor people do not have access to private healthcare that provides 70 per cent of the services. 33 states on board for rolling out the program and Punjab and Kerala are going to start soon. We are yet to have an official word from West Bengal on withdrawing from the program. The states also have the option to expand the beneficiary base it wants to cover – in that way, Ayushman Bharat has the possibility of covering as many as 14 crore families, more than the targeted number."

The mega conclave was inaugurated today in the presence of National Health Authority CEO, Dr. Indu Bhushan and Tim Kelsey, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Digital Health Agency. Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry addressed the conclave via a video message.

Presenting a summary of the achievements of Ayushman Bharat so far, Dr. Bhushan said that more than 2 crore health cards have been issued under the scheme and 92 per cent of the e-cards have been verified through Aadhar while over 6,000 cards issued are portable. He said that out of the 14,708 empaneled hospitals, 55 per cent are from the private sector taking care of 65 per cent of the treatment needs of the beneficiaries.

“Ayushman Bharat is a great leap to universal healthcare. It is a gamechanger on the scale of providing services, a more meaningful engagement of private sector hospitals as well as has unique aspects of providing affordable healthcare through collective bargaining of services, consumables, and devices, and providing cash on the delivery of services. The program increases access of the poor to quality, affordable and accountable healthcare and reduces the fragmentation of the services providers – public sector providers can refer patients to private hospitals for tertiary services,” Dr. Bhushan said.

“Ayushman Bharat is the most ambitious program by the honorable Prime Minister which is going to help considerably not only the people of India but also the rest of the world. This is the most comprehensive and aggressive program in which healthcare is made available – hospitalization and medication needs are taken care of. Also, people who suffer because of lack of medical facilities are included in it. Unfortunately, I cannot join the conclave today but I am very happy that such an initiative is taken,” said Suresh Prabhu in a video address.

Kamal Narayan, Principal Founder, India Health and Wellness Summit initiatives said, “Health doesn’t discriminate between rich and poor. Ayushman Bharat is a crucial step that the government of India has taken for creating a happy and prosperous country; the possibilities are immense. I hope that the conclave today will have some very insightful discussions, assessing initiatives and exploring collaboration opportunities.”

Tim Kelsey, who was also awarded the ‘Torchbearer of the Ayushman Bharat’ award, emphasized on paperless healthcare services and increasing the use of technology in providing healthcare services, especially in the rural and remote areas.

“Paper-based healthcare has failed – it is not efficient, cannot keep up to the large amount of data and track trends. IT is unable to support precision medicine. We need to work much harder on creating a clinical culture to adopt technology to ensure safety, quality and equity in healthcare. We also need to empower people who now do not question the recommendations of the doctor. Digitizing healthcare will also help it make more accountable and transparent,” he added.

“Today, we have the political will to provide universal healthcare and address the needs of those who face economic fluctuations and go below the poverty line due to healthcare expenditure. Ayushman Bharat is a big step in preventing this. It also ensures quality healthcare – quality is paramount when it comes to health services,” said Dr. Bobby John, Co-founder, India Health and Wellness Summit initiatives; Founder & Principal Advisor, Global Health Advocates in his Vote of Thanks.

Leading experts in healthcare and policymakers from India and abroad converged today to discuss major challenges, opportunities and the way forward towards successful implementation of the Ayushman Bharat, a program that aims to cover people equal to the total population of America, Canada, and Mexico together. The conclave held sessions on Resolutions, Possibilities, Actions for an Ayushman India, The Journey towards health protection and Ayushman Bharat: The Local and Global Impact, Operational Perspectives on Securing Health, Capacity Building Challenges at Various Healthcare Levels, Directly from the Experts: The Doctor’s Word for Ayushman Bharat, Forecasting demand and ensuring consistent and adequate supply of healthcare services, and More health for money spent – incentivizing preventive services.

The PMJAY has already issued 1.71 crore e-cards and benefitted over 12.27 lakh patients since it was launched by the Narendra Modi-led government last year.

Today, the scheme is supported by a network of around 15,000 empaneled hospitals from both government and private sectors and the growing numbers is a proof of the program being well-received by the people. A stronger public and private partnership will further boost the initiative and better the patient load sharing between hospitals. The conclave is an initiative of leading industry forum India Health and Wellness Summit, which has been at the forefront of creating constructive discourses around holistic health for several years, supported and participated by institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, key industry bodies and civil society organs.