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India on track to achieve MMR targets for SDG

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11 States achieve National Health Policy target of MMR 100/ lakh live births



“Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of India has declined by 8 points in one year as per the latest Special Bulletin on MMR released by the Registrar General of India. This decline is important as it translates to nearly 2000 additional pregnant women saved annually”. This was stated by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare.

The Union Health Minister further added that the MMR has declined from 130/ lakh live births in 2014-16 to 122/ lakh live births in 2015-17 (6.2% decline). “With this persistent decline, India is on track to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target for reducing MMR by 2025, five years ahead of timeline of 2030”, he underlined.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also congratulated the 11 States who have achieved the ambitious target of MMR of 100/lakh Live Births by 2020 set under the National Health Policy 2017. These states are Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Telangana, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Karnataka and Haryana. The most important feature of this bulletin is that MMR for the States of Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have been published independently for the first time. A total of seven States, namely Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana have shown a decline in MMR that is greater than or equal to the national average of 6.2%.

Further highlighting the driving factors for the significant and laudable achievements, Dr Harsh Vardhan stated that this has been possible in view of the gains made in institutional deliveries and focused approach towards High Priority Districts and inter-sectoral action to reach the most marginalized and vulnerable population. Focus on quality and coverage of health services through public health initiatives under the National Health Mission such as Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram and Janani Suraksha Yojana have contributed to this decline, he stated.

India is on track to achieve SDG target of MMR, however the four states namely Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan will have to intensify their efforts to accelerate the MMR decline to achieve the SDG target. New initiatives in the form of LaQshya, POSHAN Abhiyan and SUMAN (Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan Initiative) will help to ensure that all pregnant women receive quality maternal care with dignity and that no mother or newborn dies due to a preventable cause.