

## Experts at Assocham's 'Illness To Wellness' Summit put focus on investment in healthcare workforce

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### Need to strengthen quality of healthcare workers, especially the nursing staff

ASSOCHAM Foundation for CSR, under the aegis of Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), one of the apex trade associations of India, kick-started the first edition of the Awareness Summit on 'Illness to Wellness' in New Delhi on 22 March. The key objective of the two-day summit is to initiate a dialogue on promoting and building a 'New India–Healthy India'.

The first session on day one of the summit saw a panel of distinguished experts discuss the possible ways to strengthen the healthcare workforce with the objective to ease the healthcare burden of the country.

In his address during the inaugural session, the Guest of Honour Bhubaneswar Kalita, Chairperson, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare, Government of India said, "Making healthcare affordable, accessible and available to all can help us attain the Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring healthy life and promoting well-being for all age groups. Our main challenge is the lack of a diversified and qualified workforce and we must work towards improving the status quo as workforce is the soul of our healthcare system. There should also be a focus on improving women's health for larger interest of families, communities and nation in order to reduce the burden on public healthcare infrastructure and spending."

Sharing his thoughts during the inaugural session, Anil Rajput, Chairperson, ASSOCHAM National CSR Council, said, "India is at the cusp of an exciting and transformative time as it aims to reach \$26 trillion in economic prosperity in its Amrit Kaal. I strongly believe that when the workforce is healthy and capable, our nation can achieve its full potential across all domains."

Dr G. C. Khilnani, Chairman, PSRI Institute of Pulmonary, Critical and Sleep Medicine and Former Professor & Head, Pulmonary, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine, AIIMS, New Delhi, said, "Although ramping up the infrastructure is important, outcomes will not improve if adequate attention is not paid to enhancing the quality of health workforce, especially the staff nurses."

Joining the session virtually, (Padma Bhushan) Dr S. K. Sarin, Senior Professor, Department of Hepatology & Director,

Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences, New Delhi, said, "Creating a healthier generation is not doctors' effort alone; it is a team effort. Instead of following a pyramid structure, we should adopt a bottom-up approach, starting from villages. We should utilize ASHA workers to better document and understand the healthcare needs of our citizens."

(Padma Bhushan) Dr T. S. Kler, Chairman, Fortis Heart and Vascular Institute, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram & Fortis Hospital, Vasant Kunj, said, "Policies should be in place to ensure decent pay packages and respect for the crucial healthcare workers. Besides this, it is also important to reduce the healthcare burden of the country by allowing euthanasia. Introducing policies related to mandatory insurance, minimum health curriculum in schools and decreasing reservation should also be considered."