

Government of Meghalaya signs MoU with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to improve health outcomes

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Meghalaya State Health Society will be responsible for the coordination of the activities funded by the Gates Foundation



The Government of Meghalaya and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) made a major stride in the area of health when they entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together towards improving population health outcomes of the state, particularly related to maternal and newborn health, family planning, nursing education. Meghalaya is only the third state in India in area of both health and agriculture, after Uttar Pradesh & Bihar, with whom the Gates Foundation is establishing a partnership.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Conrad K Sangma and Minister of Health & Family Welfare and Agriculture, Dr M Ampareen Lyngdoh.

M. Hari Menon, Director of the India Country Office at the Gates Foundation, and Sampath Kumar, Principal Secretary to the GoM, Health & Family Welfare Department on behalf of the state signed the MoU.

The MoU signed called for the realisation of efficient and effective healthcare solutions in Meghalaya, and the parties also pledged to undertake numerous activities in the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially the health-related goal for the year 2030. The MoU will last for four years where both stakeholders shall facilitate successful delivery of the set objectives in the paper with efficiency checkups, monitoring, and evaluation.

Through the MoU, BMGF will provide both financial and technical support to improve outcomes in twelve key areas: comprehensive primary healthcare, family planning, maternal health and anaemia, neonatal health, immunisation, childhood wasting and nutrition, nursing education, supply chain management, digital health, results-based financing and performance management in healthcare, competency mapping and development for government functionaries, and agriculture and livestock development.

The collaboration between the Government of Meghalaya and the Gates Foundation is based on three strategically oriented goals for changing the current state of health care. First, it seeks to lower maternal, neonatal and child mortality through increasing access to family planning, managing anaemia and developing emergency transport to reduce death rates. Second, the partnership aims to promote health and nutrition services provided by government and non-government organisations with special reference to gender. Finally, the partnership will build the capacity of local institutions by ensuring that they are involved in policy formulation, research and breakthroughs in healthcare to support sustainable change.

The partnership will also focus on several key programme areas, such as the creation of IT solutions for primary healthcare as well as improving family planning by increasing the number of contraceptive methods and availability. It will also involve enhanced maternal and neonatal health with reference to anaemia and other essential infrastructure joined to hidden childhood wasting and anaemia through supplementary feeding and immunisation.

Also, nursing education shall be augmented by a redesigned curriculum that is globally competent and improved supply chain management to increase drug and diagnostics availability. Moreover, adopted digital health will improve research-based decision-making capabilities with the use of performance-based financing. There will also be cooperation in areas of agriculture and livestock development emphasizing building value chains and supporting small farmers in the state of Meghalaya.