

## Govt funding for TB Control goes up in last 3 years

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New DOTS logo released by Min of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India

The Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program by the Government of India encompasses diagnosis and treatment facilities including anti-TB drugs that are provided free of cost to all TB patients. Designated microscopy centers have been established for quality diagnosis for every one lakh population in the general areas and for every 50,000 population in the tribal, hilly, and difficult areas. More than 13,000 microscopy centers have been established in the country. This information was revealed by the minister of health, Mr JP Nadda in the Parliament on November 25, 2014.

The health minister while replying to a question, elaborated on the government funding and said, "During the last three years, the money spent for controlling TB has gone up. During 2011-12, the amount spent was Rs 391.16 crore and in 2012-13, it was Rs 467 crore. At the same time, during the year 2013-14, it has been hiked to Rs 500 crore."

"Treatment centers (DOT Centers) have been established near to residence of patients to the extent possible. All government hospitals, Community Health Centers (CHC), Primary Health Centers (PHC), sub Centers are DOT Centers. In addition NGOs, Private Practitioners (PPs) involved under the RNTCP, community volunteers, Anganwadi workers, women self-help groups etc., also function as DOT providers/DOT Centers. Drugs are provided under direct observation and the patients are monitored so that they complete their treatment," said Mr Nadda.

Talking about the programmatic management of Drug Resistant TB (PMDT) services, Mr Nadda mentioned, "For the management of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and TB-HIV collaborative activities for TB-HIV co-infection are being implemented throughout the country."

"As of now, because of the epidemiological pattern of the disease, the Revised National TB Control Program (RNTCP) targets Tuberculosis control and not eradication. Use of irrational treatment regimen is one of the major reasons for development of resistance to anti-TB drugs," he said.

Anti-TB Drugs have been moved from Schedule H to H1, under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, which lays down certain conditions on the usage of these drugs.

Government of India has released Standards for TB Care in India (STCI), an initiative to introduce uniform standards for TB care in all sectors. This is the first time such standards have been defined in India and is an important step to standardize diagnosis, treatment, public health action and social support systems for all TB patients in the country.

RNTCP is collaborating with the Indian Medical Association in the form of a project for involvement of Private Medical Practitioners.

The Central TB Division has entered into a MoU with Indian Pharmacist Association and All India Organization of Chemists and Druggists, SEARPhar Forum and Pharmacy Council of India for inclusion of pharmacies in RNTCP.