

## New healthcare strategy to be adopted in UP

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A new cadre of health workers is set to join the battle against non-communicable diseases in Uttar Pradesh (UP). On the lines of 'nurse doctors' in the US, the state will have mid-level healthcare providers (MLPs) who will help bridge the gap between grassroots healthcare workers and hospital-level specialist doctors.

The MLPs will contribute towards screening, prevention and management of a wide range of medical conditions. These include but are not limited to pregnancy care and childbirth, child health, family planning, communicable diseases, mental health, dental care, geriatric and palliative health care besides non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular ailments, blood pressure and diabetes.

MLPs will work at health and wellness centres (HWC) which will each serve a population of 5,000 people. As for now, several health sub-centers would be upgraded to HWCs. An MLP would head a team of ASHA, anganwadi worker, auxiliary nursing midwife or a multi-purpose health worker (male) at the HWCs.

The first batch of MLPs in UP would be nurses with a degree of general nursing midwives who will be selected for a six-month IGNOU-certified training programme. Over 600 candidates took an entrance exam on Sunday for the course. Lucknow's Veerangana Avanti Bai Women and Child Hospital has been selected and approved by IGNOU for the bridge course.

MLPs also herald a paradigm shift in healthcare from disease centric to wellness or preventive approach, something agencies like World Health Organization bank on for better quality of life.