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J P Nadda reviews the preparedness on Seasonal Influenza (H1N1)

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He highlights importance of intensive vigil, early detection and treatment



Necessary directions to monitor seasonal influenza cases with particular focus on creating awareness, ensuring availability of medicines and vaccines at field level and effective and early treatment of patients as per protocol was recently issued by J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare.

A high level meeting was recently held in Delhi which was chaired by J P Nadda. He reviewed the preparedness for prevention and management of seasonal Influenza (H1N1). Preeti Sudan, Secretary (Health) and senior officers from the Ministry, NCDC, DGHS and ICMR were also present.

During the review meeting, it was brought out that advisories have already been issued during the year to the States and the situation is being weekly monitored by the Union Health Ministry. The Ministry has also undertaken adequate steps to augment capacity of health facilities, to manage cases of Influenza (H1N1) and have further strengthened its testing facilities.

The Ministry has also ensured availability of PPE Kits and N-95 Masks for healthcare workers dealing with the cases. It was observed that there are sufficient tablets of Oseltamivir for early treatment of Influenza (H1N1) cases.

Considering the seasonality of the disease, Nadda has directed the officials to ensure continuous monitoring and vigil on all cases of Swine Flu. He specifically instructed that early detection, reporting and proper categorization of patients is critical for Swine Flu management. Accordingly, the Minister has instructed National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to monitor the cases on a daily basis. He suggested that States shall ensure that proper awareness is created on the disease with particular focus on interior and rural areas. All States shall also ensure that sufficient supplies of Oseltamivir drug are maintained at State level.

The drug has been now kept under schedule H1 of Drugs and Cosmetics Act and hence States shall ensure its wider availability with private Pharmacies also.

He further directed that "Necessary action be initiated to increase number of testing facilities for Swine Flu case both in Government and Private Sector and NCDC shall provide required support to the States on the issue. Further, all cases which require hospitalization shall be monitored intensively both at district and State level so as to ensure that fatalities can be avoided. Availability of sufficient functional ventilators for critical case management is important and States shall be advised accordingly. NCDC shall coordinate with States to provide ventilator support training, if need be."

The Union Minister directed the Central government institutions to also earmark sufficient number of beds for seasonal influenza A (H1N1) patients.