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सचिव

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Secretary



भारत सरकार
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय
Government of India
Department of Health and Family Welfare
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

D.O. No. 7(23)/2020-NHM-I
28th April 2020

Dear Colleague,

At the outset, I compliment you and your team for the hard work and commitment towards overcoming the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. I also acknowledge the exceptional work done by your team under your leadership for containment of COVID-19 outbreaks and accelerated scaling up of the Dedicated COVID facilities for providing assured and quality services to COVID-19 patients.

You would agree that while it is the need of the hour to keep our health systems in a state of readiness to surmount any possible surge in COVID-19 cases, it is also important that the non-COVID essential services are also provided to those who need them. I had recently written to the States\UTs on ensuring non-COVID essential health services and had enclosed a guidance note also. This is available at [Guidance note for enabling Delivery of Essential Health Services during the COVID 19 Outbreak \(20.04.20\)](#). It includes essential services for RCH, immunization, communicable diseases such as TB, Leprosy and vector borne diseases and non-communicable diseases such as cancer and dialysis. The Ministry has also issued detailed guidelines with SOPs for [dialysis \(Revised Guidelines for Dialysis of COVID - 19 patients \(07.04.20\)\)](#) and blood donation and transfusion ([Advisory for Voluntary Blood Donation during COVID- 19 scenario\(09.04.20\)](#)). Hon'ble Health Minister has also written to Health Ministers of all states to ensure assured and uninterrupted blood donation and transfusion services for people with blood disorders such as Thalassemia, Haemophilia and Sickle Cell Anaemia (20.04.20). I am sure that these guidelines are being scrupulously implemented in your state\UT.

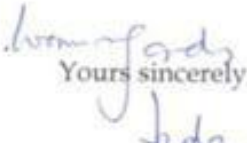
In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to certain reports received in this Ministry that many hospitals in the private sector, are hesitating in providing critical services such as dialysis, blood transfusion, chemotherapy and institutional deliveries to their regular patients either on account fear of contracting COVID-19 or they are keeping their hospitals\clinics being closed. It is also noticed that at many places the hospitals\clinics are insisting on a COVID-19 test before providing services.

You would appreciate that for patients who need these critical services, it needs to be ensured that all the health facilities, especially those in private sector, continue to be functional and provide such services so that such patients do not face any hardships. Accordingly, I request you to please ensure the following -

1. The Ministry of Home, vide their order no. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A), dated 15.04.20 (copy enclosed), have provisioned that all health services should remain functional during the period of lockdown. It is requested that movement of service providers may be facilitated, especially those working in the private sector.

2. The Indian Council of Medical Research has issued [Guidelines for COVID-19 testing \(17.04.20\)](#). These protocols may be widely disseminated among the healthcare service providers and it may be emphasized that testing for COVID-19 has to be as per the protocols. Instead, the healthcare providers may be advised to take necessary precautions for personal protection as per Ministry's [Guidelines on rational use of Personal Protective Equipment \(24.03.20\)](#). [Guidelines for Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Facilities \(25.01.20\)](#) may also be widely disseminated among the healthcare institutions, both public and private.
3. The Ministry has issued [Guidelines to be followed on detection of suspect or confirmed COVID-19 case in a non-COVID Health Facility](#) on 20.04.20. These guidelines have been issued to facilitate continuance of services in such health facilities after disinfection as per the SOPs specified in the guidelines. The enforcement machinery in the state\UT may be suitably sensitized about these guidelines and may be directed that the guidelines are implemented in true letter and spirit to obviate the fear of closure of health facilities for prolonged periods of time.
4. Detail [advisory on the use of Hydroxy-Chloroquin as prophylaxis for SARS-CoV-2 infection \(23.03.20\)](#) have also been issued. Sufficient availability of Hydroxy Chloroquin (HCQ) has been ensured.
5. Helplines set up by the States/UTs should receive grievances regarding denial of critical services specially on account of insistence on testing. The Helpline staff should be trained to respond to queries pertaining to critical services. Quick resolution of grievances may also be ensured.

I request you to please ensure that above measures are taken in consultation with the healthcare fraternity in your State\UT to allay the fears, alleviate uncertainty and to ensure that all the health facilities, especially those in private sector, both clinics and hospitals, do remain functional and that anyone needing any essential critical services including dialysis, blood transfusion, chemotherapy and institutional deliveries, is not denied such services.


Yours sincerely
Pda
(Preeti Sudan)

Encl: As above.

To,

Chief Secretaries\Administrators - All States\UTs