

Chapter 5 | HEALTH

Better health facilities are the most fundamental for every nation and to all human beings. Health makes a vital and foremost contribution to economic growth, as healthy populations live longer, are more creative and productive. Efficient public health systems are crucial for providing care for the sick, and for instituting procedures that endorse wellness and prevent disease. Poor health contributes to poverty due to the catastrophic costs of illness and diminishes learning capacity during childhood and earning ability during adulthood. It is critical to move towards a system which will enable us to address the challenges and prevent households from getting into the poverty trap and sickness. Therefore, health holds a key position towards prosperity, reduction of poverty and contributes to national economic growth.

Pakistan's Vision 2025 aims to enhance the spending in the health sector to 3 per cent of GDP and the 11th Five Year Plan (2013-2018) aspires to improve the health and well-being of the population of Pakistan as envisioned in Vision 2025. To achieve the objectives in the year ahead, there is a dire need of expanding investment in healthcare, adapting to the effects of climate change and natural disasters by means of intersectoral cooperation, strengthening primary health care services, motivating the human resource by providing incentives at the end of the year and reducing dependence on foreign donors.

Performance review 2016-17

Several programmes and projects are running to strengthen the physical conditions and well being of the people and to curb the diseases in rural and urban areas for which funding has been provided by the federal government. These programmes include, Family Planning and Primary Health Care (FP&PHC), Expanded Programme for Immunization (EPI), Malaria Control Programme, Tuberculosis (TB) Control Programme, HIV/AIDS Control Programme, Maternal Neonatal & Child Health (MNCH) Programme, Prime Minister's Programme for Prevention and Control of Hepatitis and Cancer Treatment Programme. At federal level, a separate programme namely "Coordination / Common Unit to Manage Global Fund" for bringing together the three communicable diseases i.e. TB, AIDS and Malaria has been approved to facilitate allocations, transfer and utilization of foreign funds for combating these three diseases.

The government also focused on development of a National Strategic Framework for acceleration and enhancement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Pakistan. For this purpose, Technical Support Unit for CRVS is under establishment in Pakistan Planning and Management Institute Complex (PPMI).

A national roundtable conference on "Main-streaming Sustainable Development Goals in Development Planning" was organized to honor the significant evolvement of SDGs

in Pakistan and to discuss the prospects of youth engagement in policy making for sustainable social sector outcomes. Education and Health sectors, Public Health Engineering Departments (PHED), Provincial Departments, Parliamentarians, and representatives of donor & UN agencies, international & national NGOs participated in the conference to show their commitment and share their views for achieving the SDGs in Pakistan by 2030. Conference was concluded by signing the pledge paper on our commitment of SDGs.

The federal government has also initiated a “Prime Minister’s National Health Programme” to augment the health status of the poor and vulnerable by ensuring their access to quality health care through health insurance. Efforts are underway to reduce the out-of-pocket health expenses by the poor and vulnerable population. An amount of Rs2,000 million has been allocated for this purpose in PSDP 2016-17.

A conference held on “Early Childhood Development” provided a platform to major stakeholders to get together, deliberate and design effective policies to address the health challenges faced by children in Pakistan, with special focus on “Stunting” (low height for age). A multi-sectoral task-force to monitor the progress of various interventions to improve child health in the country has been proposed.

Pakistan is facing double burden of disease and the contribution of deaths by non-communicable diseases (NCDs) has over numbered the communicable diseases. NCDs for example Heart diseases, Diabetes and various types of Cancers etc are a particular danger. It is estimated that by 2020, two out of three Pakistani deaths will be due to NCDs. The stakeholder’s consultative meeting on promoting healthy lifestyle and prevention of NCDs was convened by Planning Commission. To review the progress regarding implementation of the strategic directions set out in Vision 2025 and 11th Five Year Plan (2013-2018) for prevention of NCD’s in Pakistan, meetings were carried out. The Working group also prepared an action plan for the purpose. The plan prioritized prevention of non-communicable diseases through investment in the hospital infrastructure, health awareness through inclusion of Public health and safety knowledge in curriculum at elementary school level, legal bindings of genetic testing before marriage for diseases (e.g. Sickle Cell Anemia , Thalassemia etc), imposition of tobacco taxation, fixed share for investment in health sector and behavioral modification. It also called for the establishment of Non-Communicable Disease and Health Promotion Units to coordinate activities for health value chain. Additionally, it emphasized engagement of communities and incorporation of NCD control at local strategy levels through establishing Non-Communicable Disease surveillance system which would be integrated with district, provincial and national levels. The action plan was afterwards approved by the Honorable Minister PD&R, issued and sent to the relevant federal and provincial departments for initiating implementation. Cancer will be treated through establishment of more cancer treatment hospitals.

Every seventh death in Pakistan is caused by some type of cancer¹. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission’s (PAEC) 18 cancer hospitals in four provinces are already providing diagnostic and treatment facilities to affected patients. A project was also approved for up-gradation of nuclear medicine equipment of five PAEC cancer hospitals. Other approved projects are “Gujranwala Institution of Nuclear Medicine & Radiotherapy (GINUM) Phase-II. (Rs1397.45 million), Upgradation of Multan institute of Nuclear Medicine and Radiotherapy (Rs896.43 million) and extension of Institute of Nuclear Oncology and Radiotherapy (INOR)

¹ nation.com.pk/lahore/05-Feb-2017/every-7th-pakistani-dies-of-cancer

at a cost of Rs473.69 million. Breast cancer is the most widely spread cancer in Pakistan and different studies show that it kills almost 40,000 women every year. According to World Health Organization (WHO), breast cancer rates are getting worse and it is not sparing even younger age group. Of approximately a population of 100 million females in Pakistan today, about 10 million are going to develop breast cancer in their lifetime. The Government, keeping in view the rising need of cancer treatment facilities, has taken a new initiative of establishing a state of the art 'Cancer Hospital' in Islamabad and the amount of Rs300 million was earmarked in 2016-17 PSDP.

Safe Blood Transfusion project with the technical cooperation of GIZ (German donor agency) and KfW (German Bank) is in the implementation process in all four provinces that will bring down the incidence of hepatitis and other blood borne diseases in the country.

The PSDP allocations were made to health sector projects of Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC), Capital Administration and Development Division (CADD) and Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC). There were 30 projects of health sector at and an amount of Rs25.62 billion was allocated with an expenditure of Rs20.57 billion. The details are given in the following table:

Health Sector Projects of PSDP during 2016-17

(Rs million)			
Name of Ministry/ Organisation	No of Projects	Allocation	Expected Expenditure
Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC)	14	22,475.11	17,974.25
Capital Administration and Development Division CADD	11	717.29	160
Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC)	05	2431.13	2431.13
Total	30	25,623.53	20,565.38

Outlook 2017-18

Sustainable Development Goals propose goals and targets that incorporate economic, social and ecological characteristics and their inter linkages in achieving sustainable development in all dimensions. SDG 3 specifically related to health envisages the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births, no preventable deaths of newborns and children under-5 years of age, no epidemic of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, waterborne diseases and other communicable diseases, by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable disease through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being, strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol. By 2030, halve the number of global deaths and injuries would occur from road traffic accidents.

For the initiatives of improvement in disease information system and health promotion, campaigns will be encouraged for awareness of the general public. Filtered water supply, hygiene, conventional medicines, Health legislation for several regulatory actions and Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) are other health areas to be addressed. Access to sexual and reproductive health care services will be supported which includes but not

limited to information and education concerning family planning services. The incorporation of reproductive health into national and provincial strategies and programmes will be encouraged.

The government is formulating national strategic framework to overcome burden of non-communicable diseases. Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases will be perused eagerly. The plan also aspires to decrease drug abuse and develop policies for physically or mentally challenged people.

Efforts will be made for the provision of innovative and affordable vaccines to patients. A project of "Indigenous Vaccine Production" is also under process at National institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad.

Efforts will focus on strengthening primary care with necessary back up support in rural areas where all health outlets will function as a focal point for control of communicable diseases and family planning services. All Primary Health Care (PHC) outlet including Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centres (RHCs) will be strengthened through provision of medical equipment, staff, and medicine. Establishment of Health Emergency Surveillance and Response System; Implementation of a national plan for vaccinations, incorporation of e-health and M-health system (mobile health management) are also the key areas to work upon by the government besides improving governance and monitoring efforts as envisaged in vision 2025.

Programmes

Following are the vertical programmes for prevention and cure of major diseases. These programmes and projects are already under implementation and according to 7th NFC Award federal government is funding these projects.

- **Family Planning and Primary Health Care (FP&PHC)**

The FP & PHC programme has recruited more than 100,000 Lady Health Workers (LHWs) in 2016-17. LHWs services encompasses the health conditions of women and children through improved sanitation, birth spacing, iron supplementation, larger vaccination coverage and through Ante-natal and post-natal coverage of the pregnant women.

- **Expanded Programme for Immunization (EPI)**

The EPI provides immunization to children against the seven vaccine-preventable diseases under one year of age i.e. childhood tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, Pertussis, neonatal tetanus, measles and hepatitis B. New vaccines like pentavalent vaccine have been introduced with the help of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

- **Malaria Control Programme**

Malaria is the 2nd most prevalent communicable disease in the country. It has been the major cause of morbidity in Pakistan. More than 90 per cent of disease burden in the country is shared by 56 highly endemic districts, mostly located in Balochistan (17 out of 32 districts), FATA (7 agencies), Sindh (12 districts) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (12 districts).

- **Tuberculosis (TB) Control Programme**

Pakistan has the sixth highest burden of tuberculosis worldwide and is among the high multidrug-resistant tuberculosis burden countries. The government declared tuberculosis a national emergency, and implemented the directly observed treatment, short-course (DOTS) strategy followed by the Stop TB Strategy, which includes universal access to quality tuberculosis care in the country. Incidence of TB stands at 231 per 100,000 subjects/people.

- **Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/ acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) control programme**

Pakistan to a large degree has controlled to remain comparatively protected from the increase in AIDS cases to date. It is known as a low-prevalence, high-risk country for the spread of HIV infection. HIV / AIDS programme aims for the behavior change communication (BCC), services to high-risk population groups, treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and supply of safe blood for transfusions and capacity building of various stakeholders. The programme is technically supported by the UN agencies and Global Fund against AIDS, TB and Malaria.

- **Maternal & child health programme**

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Programme was initiated to improve women's and children's health conditions through better service delivery and supported health systems. The programme aspires to provide better access to Mother and Child health and Family Planning services with provision of comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC) services in 275 hospitals/health facilities, provision of basic EmONC services in 550 health facilities and family planning services in all health outlets.

- **Prime Minister's programme for prevention and control of hepatitis in Pakistan:**

The programme envisioned meeting the challenges caused by the elevated incidence of viral hepatitis in the country. The programme intends to decrease 50 per cent new cases of hepatitis B and C through advocacy and behavior change communication, hepatitis B vaccination of high risk groups, establishment of screening, diagnosis and treatment facilities in 150 teaching and DHQ hospitals, Safe Blood Transfusion and prevention of hepatitis A and E.

- **Cancer treatment programme**

Cancer has been considered as one of the deadliest type of non-communicable disease and the number of cases is rising frighteningly. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission's (PAEC) 18 Cancer Hospitals in four provinces are already providing diagnosis and treatment facilities to cancer patients.

New initiatives

The Federal Government envisages establishing 46 new and modern hospitals, comprising of 500, 250 and 100 beds to develop health facilities in the areas and cities where the population is most at need of the quality healthcare system. The Programme will contribute towards reducing Patient to Bed ratio from 1600:1 to 1400:1.

Phase II of the "Prime Minister's National Health Programme (PMNHP)" has been approved to reduce the out-of-pocket health expenses by the poor and vulnerable. An amount of Rs2,000 million has been allocated for this purpose in PSDP 2016-17.

The following table shows the details of PSDP 2017-18 allocations to the Health Sector projects.

PSDP 2017-18 allocation to health sector projects

(Rs million)

Name of Ministry/ Organization	No of Projects	PSDP Allocation
Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC)	19	4,052.40
Capital Administration and Development Division CADD	13	1,805.15
Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC)	7	3,428.36
Ministry of Finance	3	726.27
Ministry of Interior	3	614.36
Total	45	47,099.54

The above table shows the substantial increase of funds for health sector projects. In PSDP 2016-17, there was allocation of Rs25.62 billion for 30 projects but in 2017-18 an amount of Rs47.09 billion is earmarked for 45 projects. This is increase of 83 per cent for health sector projects.