India needs to step up war against cancer: NATHEALTH

Press Trust of India | New Delhi February 4, 2017 Last Updated at 19:48 IST

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It is feared that this count is only expected to rise in the next 10-15 years which makes it "crucial" to focus on new and more effective cancer treatments, in addition to the focus on prevention and wellness, it said.

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http://zeenews.india.com/

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"We need to scale up and expand current programmes to control cancer with care offerings that integrate screening, prevention, treatment and follow-up, enabled by partnerships, both private-private and public-private, and across the delivery, insurance, technology and pharmaceutical sectors of the healthcare industry," said Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH.

According to the World Cancer Report, 8.2 million people die each year from cancer, an estimated 13 per cent of all deaths worldwide.

"Today, cancer is the second biggest killer after heart disease in India. Data from the World Cancer Report released in 2015 indicates that in India, there are 7 lakh new cancer cases per year, killing over 3.5 lakh people every year," the body said.

It is feared that that this count is only expected to rise in the next 10-15 years which makes it "crucial" to focus on new and more effective cancer treatments, in addition to the focus on prevention and wellness, it said.

It said new cancer cases are estimated to increase by 70 per cent over the next two decades and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the governments for 2030, have a clear target for one-third reduction of death rates due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

The theme of this year's World Cancer Day "We can. I can," it said.
"We urgently need to declare war on NCDs. It is estimated that NCDs will cost India USD 6 trillion by 2030. Population-level NCD screening efforts are required among high-risk groups, followed by enrolment of diagnosed populations in holistic care plans, including education and counseling on healthy living," Bose said.

The demographic distribution of different kinds of cancers in our country also makes it important to scale up and expand current programmes with more advanced technologies and therapies so that India can find more effective solutions to overcome the cancer burden, it said.

NATHEALTH strongly recommended higher spending by both public and private sector in cancer research and treatment which can increase patient access to more effective and affordable treatment in India.

"A significant increase in healthcare spending (USD 3 trillion cumulatively) is needed to bridge the gaps in Indian healthcare. PPPs will play a key role in encouraging private investment in delivery, medical education and research and development," the body said.

First Published: Saturday, February 4, 2017 - 20:37

http://zeenews.india.com/health/india-needs-to-step-up-war-against-cancer-nathealth-1973712
Healthcare costs to become more affordable, say industrialists

By PTI | Updated: Feb 01, 2017, 05.01 PM IST

NEW DELHI: Although no major reforms were announced, plans to amend Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, formulate new norms for medical devices and taking steps for strengthening medical education will reduce healthcare cost for the masses, industry players today said.

Reacting to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's proposals in the Budget 2017-18, Apollo Hospitals Group Chairman Prathap C Reddy said: "While we were hopeful that healthcare would be accorded a national priority sector status, the structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in number of post graduate medical seats and DNB courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited."

I do hope that the health policies will address the large unmet need for quality healthcare infrastructure and in particular the need to wage a war on non-communicable diseases which the health sector has been focusing upon. In addition, the Aadhaar linked health cards for senior citizens is a very welcome step," he added.

A healthy India is pivotal for the country to retain its position as one of the fastest growing economies. Hence, "we are also pleased that the critical determinants of health, i.e. sanitation and clean drinking water have gained greater importance as they are critical to ensure preventable deaths," Reddy said.
Furthermore, a target for the elimination of Tuberculosis has been set for 2025 apart from other diseases such as Filaria, Leprosy, Measles and Kala Azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs, he added.

"From a healthcare perspective, the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome. I am happy that a new policy on medical education might be on the anvil and the FM wants to encourage private sector participation in medical education," Max Healthcare MD and CEO Rajit Mehta said.

However, healthcare outlay in the Budget hasn't been touched and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting healthcare industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long-standing demand of the sector, he added.

"The new rules to be formulated for medical devices will help in reducing costs of medical devices. With import of such devices, our diagnostic chains will be at par with international diagnostic chains.

Also, the 1.5 lakh health wellness centres will help the citizens to be more aware and facilitate them with better health benefits." Metropolis Healthcare MD & Promoter Ameera Shah said.

The government today decided to continue its efforts to reduce the cost of healthcare with plans to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics rules and devising new rules for the medical devices.

"FM’s Budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on ‘preventive & wellness’ both of which are very encouraging. Target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is the need of the hour for the Indian citizens," NATHEALTH Secretary General Anjan Bose said.
"No major healthcare reform has been announced in the budget and we await the fine print on announced initiatives. The Budget does, however, sent out some signals in the right direction," Deloitte India Partner Charu Sehgal said.

Given the huge shortage of doctors in the country, long term focus towards restructuring medical education and short term measures to add new seats and training courses in public and private sector are welcome, she added.

"The FM’s acknowledgement that the Medical Device rules will be globally harmonised and that this would facilitate investments in this sector is a reflection of the growing understanding of the international interconnectedness of this sector and the importance of global technology & investment infusion," Medical Technology Association of India (MTaI) DG Pavan Choudary said.

The other medical device sector body AdvaMed also welcomed the government’s plan to internationally harmonise the new medical device rules and attract investment into the medical device sector.

However, Chairman of AdvaMed India Working Group and Executive Committee and BD India Managing Director Varun Khanna said: "The association is disappointed as the Budget missed out on addressing higher import duties deterring introduction of innovative and high-quality devices for better patient care in India."

https://article.wn.com/view/2017/02/01/Healthcare_costs_to_become_more_affordable_say_industria list_c/
Health budget 'unclear' and 'under funded', say experts

IANS  |  New Delhi February 1, 2017 Last Updated at 20:30 IST

Even as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley allocated Rs 48,853 crore to the health sector, and assured of adding 5,000 post graduate medical seats every year, health experts and hospital owners on Wednesday called the health budget "unclear" and "under funded".

Although the experts hailed the announcement to set up All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Jharkhand and Gujarat, they said there is a need for the government to announce more for screening and preventive measures to check the growing tuberculosis (TB) burden.

"We were hopeful that health care would be accorded a national priority sector status," said Prathap C. Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

The budget allocation for the health sector for 2017-18 is Rs 48,853 crore, 23 per cent higher than last year, which stood at Rs 39,688 crore.

Stating that he is satisfied with the structural reforms in medical education, in particular the increase in the number of post graduate medical seats, Reddy said: "I do hope that the health policies will address the large unmet need for quality health care infrastructure and in particular the need to wage a war against non-communicable diseases which the health sector has been focusing on."

Jaitley in his budget speech announced 5,000 new post graduate medical seats every year in the medical colleges of India. He also said that the government will take steps to roll out Diplomate of National Budget (DNB) courses in big district hospitals.
Commenting on the budget, S.P. Yadav, Urologist and MD of Gurugram's Pushpanjali Hospital, said: "The budget 2017-18 did not discuss the health care sector in detail because of which there is no clarity as to what structural reforms the government proposes to bring in health care and medical practice."

The government also proposed to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules to ensure availability of drugs at reasonable prices and promote use of generic medicines.

Yadav said: "The prices of various drugs and health care devices are totally dependent on the formation of GST Bill. However, the government has taken a wise step by turning 1.5 lakh health sub centres to health wellness centres, which is necessary in view of the fact that health care in India will become expensive in days to come."

According to the government, it has announced an action plan to eliminate Kala-Azar and Filariasis by 2017, Leprosy by 2018 and Measles by 2020. Elimination of TB by 2025 is also targeted.

Rajit Mehta, MD and CEO, Max Health care, said the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome.

"However, I am disappointed to note that the health care outlay in the budget hasn't been properly touched upon and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting health care industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long standing demand of the sector," Mehta said.

"There is still a greater need to invest in screening and preventive measures for addressing the growing TB burden. Non-Communicable Diseases that account for 53 per cent of the disease burden should have been prioritised," said Varun Khanna, Chairman of AdvaMed India Working Group. AdvaMed is a medical device company.
Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH -- a forum for advocating better healthcare -- said: "The budget clearly focuses on improving health care access for the less privileged and on 'preventive and wellness', both of which are very encouraging.

"The target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is in line with the need of the hour for the Indian citizens."

--IANS

rup/nir/bg

(This story has not been edited by Business Standard staff and is auto-generated from a syndicated feed.)

Healthcare costs to become more affordable, say industrialists

Healthy India is pivotal for country to retain its position as one of the fastest growing economies

Press Trust of India | New Delhi February 1, 2017 Last Updated at 18:42 IST

Although no major reforms were announced, plans to amend Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, formulate new norms for medical devices and taking steps for strengthening medical education will reduce healthcare cost for the masses, industry players on Wednesday said.

Reacting to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's proposals in the Budget 2017-18, Apollo Hospitals Group Chairman Prathap C Reddy said: "While we were hopeful that healthcare would be accorded a national priority sector status, the structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in number of post graduate medical seats and DNB courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited."

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A healthy India is pivotal for the country to retain its position as one of the fastest growing economies. Hence, "we are also pleased that the critical determinants of health, i.e. Sanitation and clean drinking water have gained greater importance as they are critical to ensure preventable deaths," Reddy said.
Furthermore, a target for the elimination of Tuberculosis has been set for 2025 apart from other diseases such as Filiaria, Leprosy, Measles and Kala Azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs, he added.

"From a healthcare perspective, the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome. I am happy that a new policy on medical education might be on the anvil and the FM wants to encourage private sector participation in medical education," Max Healthcare MD and CEO Rajit Mehta said.

However, healthcare outlay in the Budget hasn't been touched and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting healthcare industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long-standing demand of the sector, he added.

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Budget 2017: Healthcare to become cheaper, say industrialists

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Health budget ‘unclear’ and ‘under funded’, say experts

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) Even as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley allocated Rs 48,853 crore to the health sector, and assured of adding 5,000 post graduate medical seats every year, health experts and hospital owners on Wednesday called the health budget “unclear” and “under funded”.

Although the experts hailed the announcement to set up All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Jharkhand and Gujarat, they said there is a need for the government to announce more for screening and preventive measures to check the growing tuberculosis (TB) burden.

“We were hopeful that health care would be accorded a national priority sector status,” said Prathap C. Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

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Jaitley in his budget speech announced 5,000 new post graduate medical seats every year in the medical colleges of India. He also said that the government will take steps to roll out Diplomate of National Budget (DNB) courses in big district hospitals.
Commenting on the budget, S.P. Yadav, Urologist and MD of Gurugram’s Pushpanjali Hospital, said: “The budget 2017-18 did not discuss the health care sector in detail because of which there is no clarity as to what structural reforms the government proposes to bring in health care and medical practice.”

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–IANS

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Health system gets huge boost with two new hospitals planned and 5,000 new medical school seats... But the pharmaceutical sector ‘feels let down’

- Two new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) are planned
- Better healthcare targeted at remote areas with health and wellness centres
- Thousands of new doctors will be trained to bridge gap in specialist demands
- See more news from India at www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome

By Mail Today Bureau

PUBLISHED: 23:35 GMT, 1 February 2017 | UPDATED: 23:35 GMT, 1 February 2017

Finance minister Arun Jaitley gave the healthcare sector a shot in the arm in the Union budget on Wednesday with announcements on two new AIIMS hospitals and creation of 5,000 additional postgraduate (PG) seats every year to improve the availability of specialist doctors.

The Centre plans to pour in Rs 47,352.51 crore into the sector in the coming fiscal year, an increase of 27.76 per cent on the Rs 37,061.55 crore set aside in 2016-17.

Apart from the two All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to be set up in Gujarat and Jharkhand, 1.5 lakh health sub-centres across the country will be transformed into 'health and wellness centres' that are expected to bring quality medical care to even remote areas.
Students doing research at the research lab at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences - two new facilities of its kind are now planned, alongside 5,000 extra medical school seats.

The minister also announced an action plan to eliminate kala azar and filariasis by 2017, leprosy by 2018, measles by 2020 and tuberculosis by 2025.

Praising the budget, Anjan Bose, secretary general of the industry body NATHEALTH, said it has a clear focus on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on 'preventive and wellness', both of which are very encouraging.

However, Dr Ajay Swaroop, secretary-cum-treasurer with the board of management at the city's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, told Mail Today: 'This budget seems to have no specifications; it's generalised. Nothing has been announced for revamping existing healthcare infrastructure.

'By 5,000 PG seats and setting up two new AIIMS in the country, it can't boost the medical sector alone till the time the present health domain is upgraded.'

'MORE SEATS, MORE TALENT'

Dr Randeep Guleria
Calling Finance Ministry's move to introduce 5,000 more postgraduate seats as one of the positive budget allocations this year, (Prof) Dr Randeep Guleria, who heads the respiratory division at AIIMS said on Wednesday:

'There is acute deficiency of specialist doctors in the country and so with the increased PG seats by 5,000 in medicine per annum would encourage the moral of a budding medical student.

'Government making action plan for eliminating critical diseases such as kala-azar, filariasis, leprosy, measles and tuberculosis are common to tropical countries like India is one of the major challenges and a good sign. These diseases are most common in rural India. The drugs for tuberculosis are expensive and it becomes a burden for the poor people to purchase them.'

Starting DNB courses in big district and reputed private hospitals will allow more and more young medical students to join the healthcare sector of the country, he said.

'The two new AIIMS will strengthen PG teaching in select ESI and Municipal Corporation Hospitals. 'Commissioning of new AIIMS in Jharkhand and Gujarat is definitely a good decision by the government to create more healthcare institution like mother AIIMS in New Delhi.'

Though no major reforms were announced, plans to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, formulate new norms for medical devices and take steps for strengthening medical education will reduce healthcare cost for the masses, industry players said.

'The government should have focused more on the health sector - like proposals for opening new AIIMS should have been for all states. Overall, the budget is good, but it is more focused on rural health. What about urban
health?' said Dr KK Aggarwal, national president of the Indian Medical Association.

Jaitley also announced plans to reduce India's infant mortality rate from 39 in 2014 to 28 in 2019, and the maternal mortality rate from 167 in 2011-13 to 100 by 2018-20.

Dr Anand Bansal, medical director at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, said: 'We hope that the plan for eliminating leprosy and tuberculosis by 2025 will be executed and implemented at the earliest to get rid of these problems.'

Experts said the decision on Aadhaar-linked health cards for senior citizens is a welcome one.

However, the healthcare outlay in the budget hasn't been touched and it remains largely underfunded.

There was no announcement on fulfilling the healthcare sector's long-standing demand on granting it the status of 'infrastructure industry'.

The new rules to be formulated for medical devices will help cut costs and India's diagnostic chains with be at par with international ones, said insiders.

Pharmaceutical sector feels 'let down' by health proposals in budget

The pharmaceutical sector representatives said the Union budget has failed to specifically address imminent challenges directly affecting the key industry, but hailed certain proposals of finance minister Arun Jaitley.
The life sciences sector had great expectations from the budget not only from a fiscal incentive perspective but also from a regulatory angle.

Expectations were based on the government's vision of making India one of the top three pharmaceutical markets by 2020, according to experts.

They, however, welcomed certain budget proposals.

This year, too, no specific impetus was given to the sector.

'The move to eradicate certain NCDs, the proposal to set up two new AIIMS, additional post-graduate medical seats, proposed amendments in the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules and new rules for medical devices are welcome. However, the Budget has not specifically addressed imminent challenges directly affecting the sector,' KPMG India National Head-Life Sciences Practice Utkarsh Palnitkar said.

In order to stay competitive in the overseas market and given the uncertain global climate, it was expected that specific impetus or incentives would be given to innovation in the form of weighted deduction on R&D, incentives for patents, exemptions of certain duties and taxes.

These demands remained largely un-addressed, giving no specific reason to cheer for the sector as a whole in 2017-18, Palnitkar said.

Glenn Saldanha, Chairman and Managing Director, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals said, overall, the Union Budget is a step in the right direction.
'Lowering tax on MSMEs is a welcome step that would provide a much-needed fillip by creation of jobs and putting more money in their pockets in all sectors, including pharmaceuticals.

The Government has shown its clear intent towards fasttracking inflow of FDI, and the scrapping of FIPB is a notable step that would go a long way in supporting the objective of ease of doing business,' Saldanha said.

Additionally, the government's impetus to reduce the borrowing cost and increase access to credit will surely help businesses to grow, he said.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-4181780/Health-gets-huge-boost-two-new-hospitals.html
Budget 2017: Health budget hiked by 28 pc; 5,000 PG seats to be created

PTI

Published Feb 1, 2017, 6:41 pm IST
Updated Feb 1, 2017, 7:49 pm IST

The Government has prepared a plan to eliminate kala-azar and filariasis by 2017, leprosy by 2018, measles by 2020 and tuberculosis by 2025.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley with Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian during a Post-Budget press conference in New Delhi. (Photo: AP)

New Delhi: To ensure availability of specialist doctors at the secondary and tertiary levels, the Centre on Wednesday announced the creation of additional 5,000 post-
graduate (PG) seats every year even as it increased the budget allocation for the health sector by almost 28 per cent.

The government also announced setting up of two more All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Jharkhand and Gujarat and asserted that it has prepared an action plan to eliminate kala-azar and filariasis by 2017, leprosy by 2018, measles by 2020 and tuberculosis by 2025.

The Centre said that while Drugs and Cosmetics Rules will be amended to ensure availability of drugs at reasonable prices, new rules for regulating medical devices will also be formulated soon while asserting that 1.5 lakh health sub-centres will be transformed into Health and Wellness Centres across the country.

According to the Union Budget 2017 presented by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Wednesday, the budget allocation for Health Ministry for 2017-18 is Rs 47,352.51 crore in comparison to allocation in 2016-17 of Rs 37,061.55 crore, an increase of 27.76 per cent from 2016. The revised allocation for 2016-17 was Rs 38,343.33 crore.

Jaitley in his speech said that the government is committed to take necessary steps for structural transformation of the regulatory framework of medical education and practice in India which includes several steps for increasing post-graduate medical seats.

"The government has prepared an action plan to eliminate kala-azar and filariasis by 2017, leprosy by 2018 and measles by 2020. Elimination of tuberculosis by 2025 is also targeted.

"Similarly, action plan has been prepared to reduce Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) from 39 in 2014 to 28 by 2019 and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) from 167 in 2011-13 to 100 by 2018-2020. 1.5 lakh health sub-centres will be transformed into Health and Wellness Centres," he said.

The allocation for Department of Health Research under the ministry too has been hiked for 2017-18 as it has been allotted Rs 1,500 crore from the previous year's allocation of Rs 1,144.80 crore. The revised allocation previous year was Rs 1,344.80 crore.
Jaitley said that to strengthen secondary and tertiary levels of health care, adequate availability of specialist doctors is needed.

"We have therefore decided to take steps to create additional 5,000 Post Graduate seats per annum. In addition, steps will be taken to roll-out Diplomate of National Board (DNB) courses in big district hospitals, strengthen PG teaching in select ESI and municipal corporation hospitals and encourage reputed private hospitals to start DNB courses," Jaitley said.

He said that two new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) will be set-up in Jharkhand and Gujarat.

Health Minister JP Nadda said that enhanced allocation to health sector in the budget will strengthen activities of the ministry towards providing universal health care.

"Draft medical devices rules have been in vogue for quite some time. It is encouraging to see that the Government will seek to introduce some regulations in the coming year" said Anand Mehta, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH, said "The Budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on "preventive & wellness" both of which are very encouraging. Target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is in line with the need of the hour for the Indian citizens."

Aadhaar-linked health cards for senior citizens and the proposal to increase number of post-graduate medical seats are some of the welcome steps in the Budget, said Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

"While we were hopeful that healthcare would be accorded a national priority sector status, the structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in the number of post graduate medical seats and DNB courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited.

"The amendment in costs of life-saving drugs and harmonisation of rules for medical devices will all add up to have a positive impact for healthcare in the country," Reddy said in a statement in Hyderabad.
He said the Budget's focus on improving the growth trajectory of the economy, its pronounced thrust on rural development alongside ensuring fiscal consolidation, will certainly have a positive impact in fiscal administration and set the stage for clean and good governance.

"Furthermore, a target of 2025 has been set for the elimination of TB apart from other diseases such as filiaria, leprosy, measles and kala azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs," Reddy said.

The Budget is not a game changer though it is a positive one, said Satish Reddy, Chairman, Dr Reddy's Lab.

He said there is no strong thrust to bolster the healthcare sector, apart from a mention about improving rural health infra with 1.5 lakh sub-centres being upgraded to health and wellness centres and setting up of two more AIIMS.

"Some amendments have been proposed to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to provide a fillip for generic medicines but the details need to emerge on what exactly is being proposed. That said, one hoped for more decisive announcements to boost the sector, which did not happen," Satish Reddy said.

The abolition of the Foreign Investments Promotion Board is a big move as it was an impediment to FDI. Initiating reforms have been talked about in this area to increase fund flows into the economy, so we will need to see how the new policy unfolds," he said.

The issue of political funding was addressed at last by capping cash donations. The introduction of electoral bonds is also a welcome move, he added.
"FM's Budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare"

Wed, 1 Feb 2017-04:47pm , PTI

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(This article has not been edited by DNA's editorial team and is auto-generated from an agency feed.)

Healthcare costs to become more affordable, say industrialists

By PTI | Updated: Feb 01, 2017, 05.01 PM IST

NEW DELHI: Although no major reforms were announced, plans to amend Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, formulate new norms for medical devices and taking steps for strengthening medical education will reduce healthcare cost for the masses, industry players today said.

Reacting to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley’s proposals in the Budget 2017-18, Apollo Hospitals Group Chairman Prathap C Reddy said: "While we were hopeful that healthcare would be accorded a national priority sector status, the structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in number of post graduate medical seats and DNB courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited."

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A healthy India is pivotal for the country to retain its position as one of the fastest growing economies. Hence, "we are also pleased that the critical determinants of health, i.e. sanitation and clean drinking water have gained greater importance as they are critical to ensure preventable deaths," Reddy said.
Furthermore, a target for the elimination of Tuberculosis has been set for 2025 apart from other diseases such as Filariasis, Leprosy, Measles and Kala Azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs, he added.

"From a healthcare perspective, the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome. I am happy that a new policy on medical education might be on the anvil and the FM wants to encourage private sector participation in medical education," Max Healthcare MD and CEO Rajit Mehta said.

However, healthcare outlay in the Budget hasn't been touched and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting healthcare industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long-standing demand of the sector, he added.

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The government today decided to continue its efforts to reduce the cost of healthcare with plans to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics rules and devising new rules for the medical devices.

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NATHEALTH Recommends 5% GST on Healthcare Supply Chain

With a presumption that the Goods & Service Tax (GST) rate on the final sale of patient care/diagnostic services by the hospitals/clinics to their patients would remain exempt from indirect taxes, Healthcare Federation of India (NATHEALTH) has recommended a 5% GST rate on earlier part of the healthcare supply chain such as supply of medical equipment/services to the hospital/clinical establishments.

In a letter of recommendations, recently submitted to GST Council, NATHEALTH urged that the overall tax cost in the healthcare supply chain needs to be as low and moderate as possible to achieve the nation’s dream of affordable and accessible healthcare to all, particularly the poorest and the most underprivileged sections of society.

“A rate of GST ranging between 8-10% as applicable today for Medical Equipment supplies to hospitals will help achieve neutrality, a lower rate will support the private healthcare sector, a higher rate will increase cost in the private sector and reduce investment opportunities,” Mr. Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH wrote to the Council.

“While we fully welcome the revised version of the Model GST law and proposals, it is our humble request that benefits/exemptions— as envisaged under ScheduleIV vis-à-vis Government hospitals/clinical establishments-should also be granted to the hospitals/clinical establishments in the private sector,” he added.
Substantiating its stand, NATHEALTH said that Healthcare in India is a USD 70 billion industry accounting for 4% of GDP. Government spending on the public health care system represents 1% of GDP per annum. On the other hand, approximately 3% of GDP is spent in the private sector on healthcare. According to National Family Health Survey-3, the private medical sector remains the primary source of healthcare for 70% of households in urban areas and 63% of households in rural areas.

Other Recommendations include exemption from input GST in case of export-oriented manufacturing operations (Make in India).

NATHEALTH said in the letter that in order to attain the goals of our ‘Make in India’ initiative, it is our recommendation that the Government/GST council should look into this aspect and make necessary provisions in the law/regulations to allow such export-oriented operations purchase their input goods/services without payment of any GST.

Considering the huge under-penetration and under-insured nature of the general Indian population, the primary objective of ensuring universal health coverage (as laid down under the National Health Policy, 2015) would be well served by exempting health insurance from GST since levy of tax on premiums acts as a disincentive for people to get health insurance coverage.

NATHEALTH has recommended for an exemption and said if exemption is not acceptable, at the very least, the Government/GST council can consider taxing the health insurance sector at a very low/concessional GST rate (certainly much lower than the current Service Tax rate).

Mr. Bose said, “We are very hopeful that all of these aspects would be considered by the Government while setting the GST rates and exemption structures in place.”

NATHEALTH pointed out that tax policy and the way that GST is implemented can have a positive, negative or neutral impact on the Healthcare sector. The Government has an important choice to make and a unique opportunity to introduce change through tax policy to support its overall healthcare strategy.

http://gstindiaguide.com/nathealth-recommends-5-gst-on-healthcare-supply-chain/
Health budget 'unclear' and 'under funded', say experts

**IANS**

Indo Asian News Service

IANS India Private Limited 1 February 2017

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https://in.news.yahoo.com/health-budget-unclear-under-funded-experts-150005245.html
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(This story has not been edited by Business Standard staff and is auto-generated from a syndicated feed.)

http://in.shafaqna.com/EN/04010708
Healthcare costs to become more affordable, say industrialists

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"Draft medical devices rules have been in vogue for quite some time. It is encouraging to see that the Government will seek to introduce some regulations in the coming year" said Anand Mehta, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

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Aadhaar-linked health cards for senior citizens and the proposal to increase number of post-graduate medical seats are some of the welcome steps in the Budget, said Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

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"The amendment in costs of life-saving drugs and harmonisation of rules for medical devices will all add up to have a positive impact for healthcare in the country," Reddy said in a statement in Hyderabad.

He said the Budgets focus on improving the growth trajectory of the economy, its pronounced thrust on rural development alongside ensuring fiscal consolidation, will
certainly have a positive impact in fiscal administration and set the stage for clean and good governance.

"Furthermore, a target of 2025 has been set for the elimination of TB apart from other diseases such as filaria, leprosy, measles and kala azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs," Reddy said.

The Budget is not a game changer though it is a positive one, said Satish Reddy, Chairman, Dr Reddys Lab.

He said there is no strong thrust to bolster the healthcare sector, apart from a mention about improving rural health infra with 1.5 lakh sub-centres being upgraded to health and wellness centres and setting up of two more AIIMS.

"Some amendments have been proposed to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to provide a fillip for generic medicines but the details need to emerge on what exactly is being proposed. That said, one hoped for more decisive announcements to boost the sector, which did not happen," Satish Reddy said.

The abolition of the Foreign Investments Promotion Board is a big move as it was an impediment to FDI. Initiating reforms have been talked about in this area to increase fund flows into the economy, so we will need to see how the new policy unfolds," he said.

The issue of political funding was addressed at last by capping cash donations. The introduction of electoral bonds is also a welcome move, he added. PTI GDK AP RSY

This is unedited, unformatted feed from the Press Trust of India wire.

http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/bud-pharma-reaax-2-last/1/872260.html
New Delhi: In the Union budget presented by finance minister Arun Jaitley on Wednesday, the health sector was singled out for attention with a slew of measures being announced ranging from ensuring availability of drugs at reasonable prices to availability of specialist doctors to strengthen secondary and tertiary levels of health care to improving India’s infant mortality rate (IMR) and maternal mortality rate (MMR).

Jaitley while talking about the health sector said that it is the poor who suffer the maximum from various chronic diseases and as such, “government has prepared an action plan to eliminate kala-azar and filariasis by 2017, leprosy by 2018 and measles by 2020. Elimination of tuberculosis by 2025 is also targeted,” he said. Interestingly in 2014 India, Bangladesh, Nepal, under the initiative of the WHO had signed a Memorandum of Understanding to eliminate Kala-Azar by 2018. “I am very happy to see the focus of the government on reducing chronic diseases. India is perhaps the only country in the world that simultaneously battles chronic as well as
lifestyle diseases and this self-imposed time limit speaks well for the less privileged sections of society,” said Anjan Bose, secretary general NATHEALTH.

As many as 5000 new postgraduate seats in medicine were also announced in order to ensure availability of specialist doctors in smaller towns as well as the transformation of 150,000 health sub-centres into Health and Wellness Centre. “In addition, steps will be taken to roll out DNB courses in big District Hospitals; strengthen PG teaching in select ESI and Municipal Corporation Hospitals; and encourage reputed Private Hospitals to start DNB courses,” Jaitley said in his budget speech.

“Expectations were much higher and though there has been an increase in the allocation of the budget (from Rs. 33,831.60 crore to Rs. 38,206.35 crore) there are issues like shortage of staff etc that we were hoping would be looked at,” said Happy Pant, advocacy coordinator of Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability.

The budget also included the announcement for the formulation of new rules for regulating medical devices. These rules, according to Jaitley, will be internationally harmonized and will help attract investment into this sector.

First Published: Wed, Feb 01 2017. 06 15 PM IST
SHOT IN ARM FOR HEALTH

FINANCE MINISTER GIVES A BOOST TO WELLNESS WITH TWO NEW AIIMS AND HIKE IN BUDGET ALLOCATION

28%
APPROX RISE IN FUNDS FOR HEALTH SECTOR AS THE CENTRE PLANS TO INVEST ₹47,982 CRORES IN COMING FISCAL YEAR

By Mail Today Bureau

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley gave the health sector a shot in the arm in the Union Budget 2017-18 tabled in the Lok Sabha on Thursday. The Centre plans to pour in ₹47,982 crores in the next fiscal as against ₹39,192 crores in the current fiscal, a rise of 22.4%.

The Union Budget 2017-18 has given a fillip to the health sector with 73% of the total expenditure. Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has announced the setting up of two new AIIMS and an additional 5,000 postgraduate seats will be created in AIIMS.

“Health is not just an issue of the state but it is a private concern of every individual, which is too often neglected because of the pressures of work and other responsibilities. The future of the society lies in the health of its individuals. If we achieve good health in every individual, we would have succeeded in building a robust society,” Jaitley said.

Jaitley said the government is committed to make #SwachhBharat mission a success. It has also decided to launch the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat (PMAB) scheme which will benefit 108 million people. The scheme aims at reducing the out-of-pocket expenditures incurred by beneficiaries on health care.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley also announced plans to ramp up India’s infant mortality rate from 39 in 2016 to 20 in 2020.

The Finance Minister has also announced action plans to eliminate kalaazar & leishmaniasis by 2017, leprosy by 2018, and tuberculosis by 2025.

A quick take on more seats, more talent

QUICK TAKE MORE SEATS, MORE TALENT

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The Union budget proposes to reduce maternal mortality rate from 178 in 2016-17 to 100 by 2018-20.
Health budget ‘unclear’ and ‘under funded’, say experts

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS): Published on 2 Feb. 2017 1:08 AM IST

Even as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley allocated Rs 48,853 crore to the health sector, and assured of adding 5,000 post graduate medical seats every year, health experts and hospital owners on Wednesday called the health budget “unclear” and “under funded”.

Although the experts hailed the announcement to set up All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Jharkhand and Gujarat, they said there is a need for the government to announce more for screening and preventive measures to check the growing tuberculosis (TB) burden. “We were hopeful that health care would be accorded a national priority sector status,” said Prathap C. Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group. The budget allocation for the health sector for 2017-18 is Rs 48,853 crore, 23 per cent higher than last year, which stood at Rs 39,688 crore.

Stating that he is satisfied with the structural reforms in medical education, in particular the increase in the number of post graduate medical seats, Reddy said: “I do hope that the health policies will address the large unmet need for quality health care infrastructure and in particular the need to wage a war against non-communicable diseases which the health sector has been focusing on.”

Jaitley in his budget speech announced 5,000 new post graduate medical seats every year in the medical colleges of India. He also said that the government will take steps to roll out Diploma of National Budget (DNB) courses in big district hospitals.

Commenting on the budget, S.P. Yadav, Urologist and MD of Gurugram’s Pushpanjali Hospital, said: “The budget 2017-18 did not discuss the health care sector in detail because of which there is no clarity as to what structural reforms the government proposes to bring in health care and medical practice.”

The government also proposed to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules to ensure availability of drugs at reasonable prices and promote use of generic medicines. Yadav said: “The prices of various drugs and health care devices are totally dependent on the formation of GST Bill. However, the government has taken a wise step by turning 1.5 lakh health sub centres to health wellness centres, which is necessary in view of the fact that health care in India will become expensive in days to come.” According to the government, it has announced an action plan to eliminate Kala Azar and Filariasis by 2017, Leprosy by 2018 and Measles by 2020. Elimination of TB by 2025 is also targeted.
Rajit Mehta, MD and CEO, Max Health care, said the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome.

"However, I am disappointed to note that the health care outlay in the budget hasn’t been properly touched upon and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting health care industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long standing demand of the sector," Mehta said.

"There is still a greater need to invest in screening and preventive measures for addressing the growing TB burden. Non-Communicable Diseases that account for 53 per cent of the disease burden should have been prioritised," said Varun Khanna, Chairman of AdvaMed India Working Group. AdvaMed is a medical device company.

Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH — a forum for advocating better healthcare — said: "The budget clearly focuses on improving health care access for the less privileged and on ‘preventive and wellness’, both of which are very encouraging.

"The target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is in line with the need of the hour for the Indian citizens."

"Draft medical devices rules have been in vogue for quite some time. It is encouraging to see that the Government will seek to introduce some regulations in the coming year" said Anand Mehta, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH, said "The Budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on "preventive & wellness" both of which are very encouraging. Target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is in line with the need of the hour for the Indian citizens."

Aadhaar-linked health cards for senior citizens and the proposal to increase number of post-graduate medical seats are some of the welcome steps in the Budget, said Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

"While we were hopeful that healthcare would be accorded a national priority sector status, the structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in the number of post graduate medical seats and DNB courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited."

"The amendment in costs of life-saving drugs and harmonisation of rules for medical devices will all add up to have a positive impact for healthcare in the country," Reddy said in a statement in Hyderabad.
He said the Budgets focus on improving the growth trajectory of the economy, its pronounced thrust on rural development alongside ensuring fiscal consolidation, will certainly have a positive impact in fiscal administration and set the stage for clean and good governance.

"Furthermore, a target of 2025 has been set for the elimination of TB apart from other diseases such as filaria, leprosy, measles and kala azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs," Reddy said. The Budget is not a game changer though it is a positive one, said Satish Reddy, Chairman, Dr Reddys Lab.

He said there is no strong thrust to bolster the healthcare sector, apart from a mention about improving rural health infra with 1.5 lakh sub-centres being upgraded to health and wellness centres and setting up of two more AIIMS.

"Some amendments have been proposed to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to provide a fillip for generic medicines but the details need to emerge on what exactly is being proposed. That said, one hoped for more decisive announcements to boost the sector, which did not happen," Satish Reddy said.

The abolition of the Foreign Investments Promotion Board is a big move as it was an impediment to FDI. Initiating reforms have been talked about in this area to increase fund flows into the economy, so we will need to see how the new policy unfolds," he said.

The issue of political funding was addressed at last by capping cash donations. The introduction of electoral bonds is also a welcome move, he added. PTI GDK AP RSY
Health budget 'unclear' and 'under funded', say experts

Wednesday, 01 February 2017 | http://www.nerve.in/news:2535003890567 | channel: India

"--IANS"

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We were hopeful that health care would be accorded a national priority sector status, said Prathap C. Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

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Jaitley in his budget speech announced 5,000 new post graduate medical seats every year in the medical colleges of India. He also said that the government will take steps to roll out Diplomate of National Budget (DNB) courses in big district hospitals.

Commenting on the budget, S.P. Yadav, Urologist and MD of Gurugram’s Pushpanjali Hospital, said: The budget 2017-18 did not discuss the health care sector in detail because of which there is no clarity as to what structural reforms the government proposes to bring in health care and medical practice.
The government also proposed to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules to ensure availability of drugs at reasonable prices and promote use of generic medicines.

Yadav said: The prices of various drugs and health care devices are totally dependent on the formation of GST Bill. However, the government has taken a wise step by turning 1.5 lakh health sub centres to health wellness centres, which is necessary in view of the fact that health care in India will become expensive in days to come.

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( 598 Words)

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http://netindia123.com/netindia/showdetails.asp?id=3047530&n_date=20170201&cat=Health
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http://news.delhionline.in/Health-budget-unclear-and-under-funded,-say-experts-1642096
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New Delhi | Wednesday, 2017 9:15:04 PM IST

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–IANS

http://nripress.com/health-budget-unclear-and-under-funded-say-experts/
HEALTHCARE COSTS TO BECOME MORE AFFORDABLE, SAY INDUSTRIALISTS – ECONOMIC TIMES

FEBRUARY 1, 2017 POOJA

NEW DELHI: Although no major reforms were announced, plans to amend Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, formulate new norms for medical devices and taking steps for strengthening medical education will reduce healthcare cost for the masses, industry players today said.

Reacting to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley’s proposals in the Budget 2017-18, Apollo Hospitals Group Chairman Prathap C Reddy said: “While we were hopeful that healthcare would be accorded a
national priority sector status, the structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in number of post graduate medical seats and DNB courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited.”

I do hope that the health policies will address the large unmet need for quality healthcare infrastructure and in particular the need to wage a war on non-communicable diseases which the health sector has been focusing upon. In addition, the Aadhaar linked health cards for senior citizens is a very welcome step,” he added.

A healthy India is pivotal for the country to retain its position as one of the fastest growing economies. Hence, “we are also pleased that the critical determinants of health, i.e. sanitation and clean drinking water have gained greater importance as they are critical to ensure preventable deaths,” Reddy said.

Furthermore, a target for the elimination of Tuberculosis has been set for 2025 apart from other diseases such as Filiaria, Leprosy, Measles and Kala Azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs, he added.

“From a healthcare perspective, the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome. I am happy that a new policy on medical education might be on the anvil and the FM wants to encourage private sector participation in medical education,” Max Healthcare MD and CEO Rajit Mehta said.

However, healthcare outlay in the Budget hasn’t been touched and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting healthcare industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long-standing demand of the sector, he added.

“The new rules to be formulated for medical devices will help in reducing costs of medical devices. With import of such devices, our diagnostic chains with be at par with international diagnostic chains.

Also, the 1.5 lakh health wellness centres will help the citizens to be more aware and facilitate them with better health benefits,” Metropolis Healthcare MD & Promoter Ameera Shah said.
The government today decided to continue its efforts to reduce the cost of healthcare with plans to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics rules and devising new rules for the medical devices.

“FM’s Budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on ‘preventive & wellness’ both of which are very encouraging. Target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is the need of the hour for the Indian citizens,” NATHEALTH Secretary General Anjan Bose said.

“No major healthcare reform has been announced in the budget and we await the fine print on announced initiatives. The Budget does, however, sent out some signals in the right direction,” Deloitte India Partner Charu Sehgal said.

Given the huge shortage of doctors in the country, long term focus towards restructuring medical education and short term measures to add new seats and training courses in public and private sector are welcome, she added.

“The FM’s acknowledgement that the Medical Device rules will be globally harmonised and that this would facilitate investments in this sector is a reflection of the growing understanding of the international interconnectedness of this sector and the importance of global technology & investment infusion,” Medical Technology Association of India (MTaI) DG Pavan Choudary said.

The other medical device sector body AdvaMed also welcomed the government’s plan to internationally harmonise the new medical device rules and attract investment into the medical device sector.

However, Chairman of AdvaMed India Working Group and Executive Committee and BD India Managing Director Varun Khanna said: “The association is disappointed as the Budget missed out on addressing higher import duties deterring introduction of innovative and high-quality devices for better patient care in India.”

Budget proposals receive mixed reaction from pharma sector

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Mumbai, Feb 1 The pharma sector representatives said the Union Budget has failed to specifically address imminent challenges directly affecting the key industry, but hailed certain proposals of Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

The life sciences sector had great expectations from the Budget not only from a fiscal incentive perspective but also from a regulatory angle. Expectations were based on the Government's vision of making India one of the top three pharmaceutical markets by 2020, according to experts.

They, however, welcomed certain Budget proposals.

This year, too, no specific impetus was given to the sector. The move to eradicate certain NCDs, the proposal to set up two new AIIMS, additional post-graduate medical seats, proposed amendments in the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules and new rules for medical devices are welcome.

However, the Budget has not specifically addressed imminent challenges directly affecting the sector, KPMG India National Head-Life Sciences Practice Utkarsh Palnitkar said.
In order to stay competitive in the overseas market and given the uncertain global climate, it was expected that specific impetus or incentives would be given to innovation in the form of weighted deduction on R&D, incentives for patents, exemptions of certain duties and taxes. These demands remained largely un-addressed, giving no specific reason to cheer for the sector as a whole in 2017-18, Palnitkar said.

Glenn Saldanha, Chairman and Managing Director, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals said, overall, the Union Budget is a step in the right direction. Lowering tax on MSMEs is a welcome step that would provide a much-needed fillip by creation of jobs and putting more money in their pockets in all sectors, including pharmaceuticals.

The Government has shown its clear intent towards fast-tracking inflow of FDI, and the scrapping of FIPB is a notable step that would go a long way in supporting the objective of ease of doing business, Saldanha said.

Additionally, the Government's impetus to reduce the borrowing cost and increase access to credit will surely help businesses to grow, he said.

"We see the biggest-ever allocation to the infra sector which would benefit all sectors, including the fast-growing pharmaceuticals. The Finance Minister reiterates his commitment to keep current account deficit and fiscal deficit under control," Saldanha said.

"The Medical Council recently amended its guidelines to encourage doctors to prescribe generic names of medicines. In the Budget, it has been indicated that changes may also be introduced to the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules along similar lines. This will be a significant change if introduced and pharma firms will have to alter their marketing strategies" said Bhavik Narsana, Partner, Khaitan & Co. (more)

"Draft medical devices rules have been in vogue for
quite some time. It is encouraging to see that the Government will seek to introduce some regulations in the coming year" said Anand Mehta, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH, said "The Budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on "preventive & wellness" both of which are very encouraging. Target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is in line with the need of the hour for the Indian citizens."

Aadhaar-linked health cards for senior citizens and the proposal to increase number of post-graduate medical seats are some of the welcome steps in the Budget, said Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

"While we were hopeful that healthcare would be accorded a national priority sector status, the structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in the number of post graduate medical seats and DNB courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited.

"The amendment in costs of life-saving drugs and harmonisation of rules for medical devices will all add up to have a positive impact for healthcare in the country," Reddy said in a statement in Hyderabad.

He said the Budget's focus on improving the growth trajectory of the economy, its pronounced thrust on rural development alongside ensuring fiscal consolidation, will certainly have a positive impact in fiscal administration and set the stage for clean and good governance.

"Furthermore, a target of 2025 has been set for the elimination of TB apart from other diseases such as filiaria, leprosy, measles and kala azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs," Reddy said.
The Budget is not a game changer though it is a positive one, said Satish Reddy, Chairman, Dr Reddy's Lab.

He said there is no strong thrust to bolster the healthcare sector, apart from a mention about improving rural health infra with 1.5 lakh sub-centres being upgraded to health and wellness centres and setting up of two more AIIMS.

"Some amendments have been proposed to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to provide a fillip for generic medicines but the details need to emerge on what exactly is being proposed. That said, one hoped for more decisive announcements to boost the sector, which did not happen," Satish Reddy said.

The abolition of the Foreign Investments Promotion Board is a big move as it was an impediment to FDI. Initiating reforms have been talked about in this area to increase fund flows into the economy, so we will need to see how the new policy unfolds," he said.

The issue of political funding was addressed at last by capping cash donations. The introduction of electoral bonds is also a welcome move, he added.

'New AIIMS will boost tertiary care services'

Jaitley said the Centre would work with the states to take these tasks forward and that the government was committed to take necessary steps for structural transformation of the Regulatory Framework of Medical Education and Practice in India.

New Delhi, Feb 1 Welcoming the Centre's proposal to build two new AIIMS, medical fraternity today said it would reduce out-of-pocket expenditure by people in the country and provide a "huge boost" to tertiary care services in the public sector.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley while presenting the Union Budget 2017-18 proposed to set up an AIIMS each in Gujarat and Jharkhand.

"AIIMS welcomes the 2017 Union Budget proposals for the health sector, which are aimed at strengthening the primary, secondary and tertiary care clinical facilities, reduce out-of-pocket expenditures, and enable India to achieve the sustainable development goals.

"The creation of AIIMS in different parts of the country would provide a huge boost to tertiary care services in public sector," Deputy Director of Administration, AIIMS, V Srinivas said.

Jaitley in his budget speech also said the government has decided to work towards increasing seats for postgraduate medical education by 5,000 per year.
"We will work with the state governments to take these tasks forward. The government is committed to take necessary steps for structural transformation of the regulatory framework of medical education and practice in India," he said.

The budgetary allocation for AIIMS has also been increased to Rs 2,400 crore from Rs 2,043 in the last budget.

For the Centre-run, RML Hospital too the allocation has been hiked to Rs 556.87 crore from Rs 492 in the last budget.

"We welcome the proposal made towards increasing the PG seats. There is a shortage of doctors and we need more quality doctors," Medical Superintendent at RML Hospital, Dr A K Gadpayle said.

Jaitley in his budget speech said, "We need to ensure adequate availability of specialist doctors to strengthen secondary and tertiary levels of healthcare. We have therefore decided to take steps to create additional 5,000 post-graduate seats per annum."

"Poverty is usually associated with poor health. It is the poor who suffer the maximum from various chronic diseases. Government has therefore prepared an action plan to eliminate kala-azar and filariasis by 2017, leprosy by 2018 and measles by 2020. Elimination of tuberculosis by 2025 is also targeted," he said. (MORE)

'New AIIMS will boost tertiary care services'

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Indian Medical Association President K K Aggarwal said,

"The proposal to set up two new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences in Gujarat and Jharkhand is a positive development. But we need an AIIMS in every state."

"Action plans to eliminate Kala Azar and Filariasis by 2017, leprosy by 2018, measles by 2020 and tuberculosis (TB) by 2025 will bring a major relief. Focusing on elderly health care, Aadhaar cards mentioning their health conditions will be issued and is a move in the right direction," he said.

The Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease (PFCD), a global organisation committed towards raising awareness on non-communicable diseases, however, said, there should have been emphasis on non-communicable diseases too.

"Although health has been accorded priority in the 2017 Union Budget, non-communicable diseases that account for 53 per cent of the disease burden, remain a back-burner and that is disappointing.

"NCDs impact negatively in the socio-economic development of India and should have been prioritised. The country is on track to lose substantial economic output by 2030 as a result of NCDs and threatened by its
epidemical nature. Despite this, the focus remains skewed towards communicable diseases," Chairman, PFCD, Dr Kenneth Thorpe said.

"What is required now is effective utilisation of these funds through innovative financing models such as a multi-payer approach and payment and pooling," he added.

George Institute for Global Health said, "We applaud the digital health village idea, which provides a good opportunity to take an integrated, evidence-informed approach to management of chronic diseases. It would be important to move from slogans to evidence-based implementation plans."

Jaitley said the Centre would work with the states to take these tasks forward and that the government was committed to take necessary steps for structural transformation of the Regulatory Framework of Medical Education and Practice in India.

The budget also proposes to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules to ensure availability of drugs at reasonable prices and promote use of generic medicines.

New rules for regulating medical devices will also be formulated and these rules will be internationally harmonised and attract investment into this sector with an aim to reduce the cost of such devices, he said.

Meanwhile, Union Health Minister J P Nadda congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Jaitley for the budget which he said was focused on welfare of all sections of society.

"Enhanced allocation to health sector in #Budget2017 will strengthen activities of the @MoHFW_INDIA towards providing universal health care."
We are committed to make #SwasthaBharat by eliminating several diseases in coming years," he tweeted.

The focus on tuberculosis comes after the World Health Organization recently saying that this epidemic in India is "larger" than what was previously estimated and the country was one of six nations which accounted for 60 per cent of the new cases in 2015.

Reacting to the budget, Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH said, "FM's budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on 'preventive and wellness' both of which are very encouraging.

"Target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is in line with the need of the hour for the Indian citizens," he said.

Forum Coordinator, Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AiMeD) Rajiv Nath said that though the Finance Minister in his budget statement has not specified the increase requested for basic import duty of at least 10 per cent on medical devices, however, it's heartening to hear that new rules regarding such devices regulations will be formulated and the cost of medical devices will be reduced.

"But what remains to be seen is how serious is the government's intent to spruce up manufacturing in the 70 per cent import dependent (90 per cent for medical electronics) import dependent medical devices industry," he said.

Healthcare costs to become more affordable, say industrialists

By PTI | Updated: Feb 01, 2017, 05.01 PM IST

NEW DELHI: Although no major reforms were announced, plans to amend Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, formulate new norms for medical devices and taking steps for strengthening medical education will reduce healthcare cost for the masses, industry players today said.

Reacting to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley’s proposals in the Budget 2017-18, Apollo Hospitals Group Chairman Prathap C Reddy said: "While we were hopeful that healthcare would be accorded a national priority sector status, the structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in number of post graduate medical seats and DNB courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited."

I do hope that the health policies will address the large unmet need for quality healthcare infrastructure and in particular the need to wage a war on non-communicable diseases which the health sector has been focusing upon. In addition, the Aadhaar linked health cards for senior citizens is a very welcome step," he added.

A healthy India is pivotal for the country to retain its position as one of the fastest growing economies. Hence, "we are also pleased that the critical determinants of health, i.e. sanitation and clean drinking water have gained greater importance as they are critical to ensure preventable deaths," Reddy said.
Furthermore, a target for the elimination of Tuberculosis has been set for 2025 apart from other diseases such as Filiaria, Leprosy, Measles and Kala Azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs, he added.

"From a healthcare perspective, the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome. I am happy that a new policy on medical education might be on the anvil and the FM wants to encourage private sector participation in medical education," Max Healthcare MD and CEO Rajit Mehta said.

However, healthcare outlay in the Budget hasn't been touched and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting healthcare industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long-standing demand of the sector, he added.

"The new rules to be formulated for medical devices will help in reducing costs of medical devices. With import of such devices, our diagnostic chains with be at par with international diagnostic chains.

Also, the 1.5 lakh health wellness centres will help the citizens to be more aware and facilitate them with better health benefits," Metropolis Healthcare MD & Promoter Ameera Shah said.

The government today decided to continue its efforts to reduce the cost of healthcare with plans to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics rules and devising new rules for the medical devices.

"FM's Budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on 'preventive & wellness' both of which are very encouraging. Target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is the need of the hour for the Indian citizens," NATHEALTH Secretary General Anjan Bose said.
"No major healthcare reform has been announced in the budget and we await the fine print on announced initiatives. The Budget does, however, sent out some signals in the right direction," Deloitte India Partner Charu Sehgal said.

Given the huge shortage of doctors in the country, long term focus towards restructuring medical education and short term measures to add new seats and training courses in public and private sector are welcome, she added.

"The FM’s acknowledgement that the Medical Device rules will be globally harmonised and that this would facilitate investments in this sector is a reflection of the growing understanding of the international interconnectedness of this sector and the importance of global technology & investment infusion," Medical Technology Association of India (MTai) DG Pavan Choudary said.

The other medical device sector body AdvaMed also welcomed the government's plan to internationally harmonise the new medical device rules and attract investment into the medical device sector.

However, Chairman of AdvaMed India Working Group and Executive Committee and BD India Managing Director Varun Khanna said: "The association is disappointed as the Budget missed out on addressing higher import duties deterring introduction of innovative and high-quality devices for better patient care in India."

http://pairsonnalites-au.blogspot.in/2017/02/healthcare-costs-to-become-more.html
Pharma industry reacts positively to Budget 2017-18

Our Bureau, Mumbai
Wednesday, February 01, 2017, 17:00 Hrs [IST]

The healthcare industry has reacted positively to the Union Budget presented in Parliament today by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. Industry leaders have voiced optimism on the fact that the increase in health expenditure by 20 per cent reflects greatly on the government’s intent to prioritize healthcare in India. Moreover, abolishing FIPB shows India more welcoming of FDI and relaxation of protectionist barriers.

Welcoming the budget, DG Shah, Secretary General of Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance said the increase in social and infrastructure spending in the budget will enlarge pharma market and push growth. However there is no clarity on how amendment to Drugs and Cosmetics Act will help reduce drug prices. This most likely hints at making generic prescribing mandatory, he said.

“The Union Budget 2017 has taken a step towards making healthcare not just affordable but structurally robust as well. However, technology could prove to be a disruptive factor in assuring that the healthcare reaches out to those who have been hitherto isolated from it. But, unfortunately the budget has completely overlooked the health-tech startup which are changing the landscape of healthcare industry in India. With a focus on transparency and reach, they have been deprived of an opportunity to make a dent in healthcare ecosystem,” reacted Ravi Venkat, MD & Founder, Credilink, a medical assistance company that gives guidance to a patient from the first consultation through the entire hospitalization process.

According to Dr. Rajendra Patankar, COO, Narawati Super Specialty Hospital, Mumbai, “To a greater extent, the budget has succeeded in addressing the urgent issue of rationalization of expenditure in the health sector through several positive measures. Increased emphasis on use of generic medicines and large-scale availability of drugs at reasonable price points through the amendment of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules will bring a large section of the population within the ambit of affordable medical care and institutionalize the domestic healthcare sector. The announcement to formulate new rules for medical devices has the definite potential to scale down exorbitant costs of critical life-saving surgical procedures. Generic medical care is bound to get a huge boost with the health conditions of senior citizens monitored via Aadhar cards. By announcing 5,000 additional seats in government medical colleges, the government has positively initiated the move to narrow the growing doctor-patient demand supply gap in the country.”

Dr. Pratap C Reddy, chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group said, “The structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in the number of post graduate medical seats and DBT courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited. But, I do hope that the health policies will address the larger unmet need for quality healthcare infrastructure and in particular the need to wage a war on non-communicable diseases which the health sector has been focusing upon.”

“The Medical Council had recently amended its guidelines to encourage doctors to prescribe generic names of medicines. In the budget speech, it has been indicated that changes may also be introduced to the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules along similar lines. This will be a significant change if introduced and Pharma companies will have to alter their marketing strategies,” said Bhavik Narsang, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

“The Finance Minister spoke about bringing medical devices into the price control net. The price control on stents last year met some industry resistance. Given medical devices have not been in price control before, industry reactions will be interesting,” said Ajay Bhargava, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

“Draft medical devices rules have been in vogue for quite some time already. It is encouraging to see that the Government will seek to introduce some regulations in the coming year,” said Amand Mehta, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

“Telemedicine levels in India despite the enhanced levels of internet penetration have been quite low. The reference in the budget speech of this important aspect of increasing the healthcare footprint is likely to create new business opportunities,” said Sameer Seth, Associate Partner, Khaitan & Co.

“The budget speech gave emphasis to increasing investment in medical devices’ manufacturing in India. One aspect which should be addressed is the patentability of medical devices, given certain exclusions to patentability, and thus due care needs to be taken while drafting these applications,” said Adhish Narpalkar, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

Reacting to the budget, Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH, says, “FM’s Budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on "prevention & wellness" both of which are very encouraging. Target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is in line with the need of the hour for the Indian citizens.”

Pavan Choudary, Director General, Medical Technology Association of India (MTA), said “The FM’s acknowledgment that the Medical Device Rules will be globally harmonised and that this would facilitate investments in this sector is a reflection of the growing understanding of the international interconnectedness of this sector and the importance of global technology & investment infusion.”

Charu Sehgal, Partner, Deloitte India, said that though no major healthcare reform has been announced yet it sends out some signals in the right direction. Given the huge shortage of doctors in the country, long term focus towards restructuring medical education and short term measures to add new seats and training courses in public and private sector are welcome. Also it’s heartening to see the government speciftically focus on medical devices. Especially the need to harmonize policies to encourage local manufacturing and improve affordability for patients.

In his reaction to the budget, Dr. Srirat Bharadwaj’s, Founder and CEO of Vatsalya Dental, said, “At the face of it, from a healthcare perspective, the budget looks positive. The government through its action to eliminate kala-azar and filariasis diseases by 2017-18, leprosy by 2018, measles by 2020, and elimination of tuberculosis by 2025, has given an impression that they are serious in postponing the eradication of these diseases. However, there could have been an allocation and serious focus on Oral Health Promotion as Dental diseases are a significant public health menace and have a substantial impact on general health and the quality of life.”
Commenting on the new announcement for Healthcare and Startups, Chirag Patel, CEO - KOCH Sports said, “The budget for the first time addressed well being of the nation by changing health centres to well being centres and this is good sign for the health and fitness sector in general and sports in particular. Recognition is the first step to trigger change. Also a further boost on skilling is welcome if we have to create jobs to effect transformation in sports outcomes”.

Echoing similar views, Varun Khanna, chairman of Advamed India Working Group and Executive Committee, and managing director, BD India, says, “Advamed welcomes the government’s plan to internationally harmonize the new medical device rules and attract investment into the medical device sector. He further adds, “The association is disappointed as the budget missed out on addressing higher import duties deterring introduction of innovative and high-quality devices for better patient care in India. We were hoping for excise duty reduction on medical devices in areas of critical care and duty reductions to life saving technologies to reduce the cost of treatment and burden on patients. Our industry continues to urge the government of India to implement a separate regulatory framework for the medical devices sector which will enable international and domestic manufacturers better address the needs - availability, affordability and access - of Indian patients and give the much needed fillip to the sector”.

Says Rajesh Mundra, CEO, Truworth Wellness, “From the health and wellness companies point of view one of the significant proposals is setting up of DigiGaon with tele-medicine centers. This would help increasing the reach of tele-health companies to the rural market as well, thus providing quality care to the bottom of pyramid”.

Ameera Shah, MD and Promoter at Metropolis Healthcare Ltd. Said, “Overall, Financial Minister Arun Jaitley’s budget announcement wasn’t great for the healthcare sector. Certain positive announcement’s like launch of DigiGaon to promote telemedicine and linking aadhaar cards with the health conditions of the citizens is another great initiative undertaken by the government.”

Dr. Rajeev Bouchikanak, CEO, Bharati Hospital says, “Other important issues that did not get attention from the Finance Minister were Tax Incentives for Specified Activities like Tax incentives should have been provided for the following activities of digitization. To boost the ‘Digital India’ initiative of the government, financial incentives/ grants should have been provided to institution that are willing to move towards maintenance of Electronic Health Records (EHR) and Health IT Systems. 250% deduction on investment made for the implementation of EHR should have been extended.

Accreditation - To incentivise hospitals and diagnostic laboratories to undergo accreditation, there should have been 100% deduction on approved expenditure incurred for securing accreditation from National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) and National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration of Laboratories (NABL) respectively.”

"In order to stay competitive in the overseas market and given the uncertain global climate, it was expected that specific impetus or incentives would be given to innovation in the form of weighted deduction on R&D, incentives for patents, exemptions of certain duties and taxes. These demands remained largely unaddressed, giving no specific reason to cheer for the sector as a whole in 2017–18,” said Utkarsh Palnitkar, National Head - Life Sciences practice, KPMG in India.

Mudit Vijayvergiya, Co-founder, Curofy says, “Being a startup we are happy to hear that government has decided to relax the income tax liabilities applied on startups. The profit deduction period for entrepreneurial jubilees has also been increased from the previous three out of five years. The startups can now claim 100 percent deduction of profits for three out of the first seven years.”

“The proposal by the government to formulate new regulations for medical devices is a welcome move. India is one of the fastest growing markets for healthcare in the world, and it is important that the country starts to design and manufacture medical devices that are in the class and follow international standards in quality and compliance. This will not only ensure patient safety but also make the domestic industry globally competitive”, says Suresh Sugavanam, vice president and managing director, UL South Asia.
Health budget 'unclear' and 'under funded', say experts

New Delhi: Even as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley allocated Rs 48,853 crore to the health sector, and assured of adding 5,000 post graduate medical seats every year, health experts and hospital owners on Wednesday called the health budget "unclear" and "under funded". Although the experts hailed the announcement to set up All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Jharkhand and Gujarat, they said there is a need for the government to announce more for screening and preventive measures to check the growing tuberculosis (TB) burden.
"We were hopeful that health care would be accorded a national priority sector status," said Prathap C. Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

The budget allocation for the health sector for 2017-18 is Rs 48,853 crore, 23 per cent higher than last year, which stood at Rs 39,688 crore.

Stating that he is satisfied with the structural reforms in medical education, in particular the increase in the number of post graduate medical seats, Reddy said: "I do hope that the health policies will address the large unmet need for quality health care infrastructure and in particular the need to wage a war against non-communicable diseases which the health sector has been focusing on."

Jaitley in his budget speech announced 5,000 new post graduate medical seats every year in the medical colleges of India. He also said that the government will take steps to roll out Diplomate of National Budget (DNB) courses in big district hospitals.

Commenting on the budget, S.P. Yadav, Urologist and MD of Gurugram's Pushpanjali Hospital, said: "The budget 2017-18 did not discuss the health care sector in detail because of which there is no clarity as to what structural reforms the government proposes to bring in health care and medical practice."

The government also proposed to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules to ensure availability of drugs at reasonable prices and promote use of generic medicines.

Yadav said: "The prices of various drugs and health care devices are totally dependent on the formation of GST Bill. However, the government has taken a wise step by turning 1.5 lakh health sub centres to health wellness centres, which is necessary in view of the fact that health care in India will become expensive in days to come."

According to the government, it has announced an action plan to eliminate Kala-Azar and Filariasis by 2017, Leprosy by 2018 and Measles by 2020. Elimination of TB by 2025 is also targeted.

Rajit Mehta, MD and CEO, Max Health care, said the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome.

"However, I am disappointed to note that the health care outlay in the budget hasn’t been properly touched upon and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting health care industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long standing demand of the sector," Mehta said.
"There is still a greater need to invest in screening and preventive measures for addressing the growing TB burden. Non-Communicable Diseases that account for 53 per cent of the disease burden should have been prioritised," said Varun Khanna, Chairman of AdvaMed India Working Group. AdvaMed is a medical device company.

Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH -- a forum for advocating better healthcare -- said: "The budget clearly focuses on improving health care access for the less privileged and on 'preventive and wellness', both of which are very encouraging.

"The target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is in line with the need of the hour for the Indian citizens."

Budget 2017: Healthcare 'under funded', say experts

Source :IANS and SIFY
Last Updated: Wed, Feb 01, 2017 21:49 hrs

New Delhi: Even as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley allocated Rs 48853 crore to the health sector, and assured of adding 5000 post graduate medical seats every year, health experts and hospital owners on Wednesday called the health budget "unclear" and "under funded".
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Summing up the healthcare announcements in the budget:

Pilot project for Aadhar-based smart health cards for senior citizens
Aadhaar-based smart cards to be introduced for senior citizens, says Jaitley. It will be a pilot project containing health details of senior citizens.

LIC to implement a senior citizen scheme with an assured return of 8 per cent for 10 years.
Announces goal to eliminate kala-azar and filariasis by 2017, leprosy by 2018, measles by 2020, tuberculosis by 2025.

Health budget 'unclear' and 'under funded', say experts
Wed, 02/01/2017 - 20:30

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) Even as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley allocated Rs 48,853 crore to the health sector, and assured of adding 5,000 post graduate medical seats every year, health experts and hospital owners on Wednesday called the health budget "unclear" and "under funded".

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Stating that he is satisfied with the structural reforms in medical education, in particular the increase in the number of post graduate medical seats, Reddy said: "I do hope that the health policies will address the large unmet need for quality health care infrastructure and in particular the need to wage a war against non-communicable diseases which the health sector has been focusing on."

Jaitley in his budget speech announced 5,000 new post graduate medical seats every year in the medical colleges of India. He also said that the government will take steps to roll out Diplomate of National Budget (DNB) courses in big district hospitals.

Commenting on the budget, S.P. Yadav, Urologist and MD of Gurugram's Pushpanjali Hospital, said: "The budget 2017-18 did not discuss the health care sector in detail because of which there is no clarity as to what structural reforms the government proposes to bring in health care and medical practice."
The government also proposed to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules to ensure availability of drugs at reasonable prices and promote use of generic medicines.

Yadav said: "The prices of various drugs and health care devices are totally dependent on the formation of GST Bill. However, the government has taken a wise step by turning 1.5 lakh health sub centres to health wellness centres, which is necessary in view of the fact that health care in India will become expensive in days to come."

According to the government, it has announced an action plan to eliminate Kala-Azar and Filariasis by 2017, Leprosy by 2018 and Measles by 2020. Elimination of TB by 2025 is also targeted.

Rajit Mehta, MD and CEO, Max Health care, said the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome.

"However, I am disappointed to note that the health care outlay in the budget hasn't been properly touched upon and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting health care industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long standing demand of the sector," Mehta said.

"There is still a greater need to invest in screening and preventive measures for addressing the growing TB burden. Non-Communicable Diseases that account for 53 per cent of the disease burden should have been prioritised," said Varun Khanna, Chairman of AdvaMed India Working Group. AdvaMed is a medical device company.

Anjan Bose, Secretary General, NATHEALTH -- a forum for advocating better healthcare -- said: "The budget clearly focuses on improving health care access for the less privileged and on 'preventive and wellness', both of which are very encouraging.

"The target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is in line with the need of the hour for the Indian citizens."

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Budget 2017: Healthcare ‘under funded’, say experts

New Delhi: Even as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley allocated Rs 48853 crore to the health sector, and assured of adding 5000 post graduate medical seats every year, health experts and hospital owners on Wednesday called the health budget “unclear” and “under funded”.

Although the experts hailed the announcement to set up All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Jharkhand and Gujarat, they said there is a need for the government to announce more for screening and preventive measures to check the growing tuberculosis (TB) burden.
“We were hopeful that health care would be accorded a national priority sector status,” said Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group.

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Summing up the healthcare announcements in the budget:

Pilot project for Aadhar-based smart health cards for senior citizens

Aadhaar-based smart cards to be introduced for senior citizens, says Jaitley. It will be a pilot project containing health details of senior citizens.

LIC to implement a senior citizen scheme with an assured return of 8 per cent for 10 years.

Announces goal to eliminate kala-azar and filarisis by 2017, leprosy by 2018, measles by 2020, tuberculosis by 2025.

Healthcare costs to become more affordable, say industrialists

By PTI | Updated: Feb 01, 2017, 05.01 PM IST

NEW DELHI: Although no major reforms were announced, plans to amend Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, formulate new norms for medical devices and taking steps for strengthening medical education will reduce healthcare cost for the masses, industry players today said.

Reacting to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's proposals in the Budget 2017-18, Apollo Hospitals Group Chairman Prathap C Reddy said: "While we were hopeful that healthcare would be accorded a national priority sector status, the structural reform in medical education, in particular the increase in number of post graduate medical seats and DNB courses is praiseworthy as it was long-awaited."

I do hope that the health policies will address the large unmet need for quality healthcare infrastructure and in particular the need to wage a war on non-communicable diseases which the health sector has been focusing upon. In addition, the Aadhaar linked health cards for senior citizens is a very welcome step," he added.

A healthy India is pivotal for the country to retain its position as one of the fastest growing economies. Hence, "we are also pleased that the critical determinants of health, i.e. sanitation and clean drinking water have gained greater importance as they are critical to ensure preventable deaths," Reddy said.
Furthermore, a target for the elimination of Tuberculosis has been set for 2025 apart from other diseases such as Filaria, Leprosy, Measles and Kala Azar are all being targeted, which is a key need of the day in addition to addressing the onslaught of NCDs, he added.

"From a healthcare perspective, the announcement of the goal of eradicating TB from India by 2025 is welcome. I am happy that a new policy on medical education might be on the anvil and the FM wants to encourage private sector participation in medical education," Max Healthcare MD and CEO Rajit Mehta said.

However, healthcare outlay in the Budget hasn't been touched and it remains largely under-funded. There is no announcement regarding granting healthcare industry the status of infrastructure industry, a long-standing demand of the sector, he added.

"The new rules to be formulated for medical devices will help in reducing costs of medical devices. With import of such devices, our diagnostic chains with be at par with international diagnostic chains.

Also, the 1.5 lakh health wellness centres will help the citizens to be more aware and facilitate them with better health benefits," Metropolis Healthcare MD & Promoter Ameera Shah said.

The government today decided to continue its efforts to reduce the cost of healthcare with plans to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics rules and devising new rules for the medical devices.

"FM’s Budget clearly focuses on improving healthcare access for the less privileged and on 'preventive & wellness' both of which are very encouraging. Target of transforming 1.5 lakh health sub-centres into health wellness centres is the need of the hour for the Indian citizens," NATHEALTH Secretary General Anjan Bose said.
"No major healthcare reform has been announced in the budget and we await the fine print on announced initiatives. The Budget does, however, sent out some signals in the right direction," Deloitte India Partner Charu Sehgal said.

Given the huge shortage of doctors in the country, long term focus towards restructuring medical education and short term measures to add new seats and training courses in public and private sector are welcome, she added.

"The FM's acknowledgement that the Medical Device rules will be globally harmonised and that this would facilitate investments in this sector is a reflection of the growing understanding of the international interconnectedness of this sector and the importance of global technology & investment infusion," Medical Technology Association of India (MTai) DG Pavan Choudary said.

The other medical device sector body AdvaMed also welcomed the government's plan to internationally harmonise the new medical device rules and attract investment into the medical device sector.

However, Chairman of AdvaMed India Working Group and Executive Committee and BD India Managing Director Varun Khanna said: "The association is disappointed as the Budget missed out on addressing higher import duties deterring introduction of innovative and high-quality devices for better patient care in India."

http://www.trendingnews.co.in/go/2017020126_000001_1000136872
Health Budget ‘Unclear’ And ‘Under Funded’, Say Experts

New Delhi, Feb 1 (IANS) Even as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley allocated Rs 48,853 crore to the health sector, and assured of adding 5,000 post graduate medical seats every year, health experts and hospital owners on Wednesday called the health budget “unclear” and “under funded”.

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http://yashnews.com/health-budget-unclear-and-under-funded-say-experts/