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## Draft National Health Policy proposes making health a fundamental right

Sushmi Dey, TNN | Jan 1, 2015, 06.28AM IST

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NEW DELHI: The draft National Health Policy, 2015 has proposed a target of raising public health expenditure to 2.5 % from the present 1.2% of GDP. It also notes that 40% of this would need to come from central expenditure.

The draft policy, released by health ministry on Wednesday seeking comments from various stakeholders, also suggests making health a fundamental right similar to education and denial of the same could be punishable. "The Centre shall enact, after due discussion and on the request of three or more states a National Health Rights Act, which will ensure health as a fundamental right, whose denial will be justiciable," the draft says.

The draft policy has been placed in the public domain until 28 February, 2015 for public consultation. The new policy is being introduced almost 13 years after the last health policy was drafted.

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As per the draft document, government plans to rely mostly on general taxation for financing health care expenditure. "With the projection of a promising economic growth, the fiscal capacity to provide this level of financing should become available," it said.

The government is also keen to explore the creation of a health cess on the lines of education cess for raising money needed to fund the expenditure it would entail. "Other than general taxation, this cess could mobilize contributions from specific commodity taxes such as the taxes on tobacco, and alcohol, from specific industries and innovative forms of resource mobilization," the draft policy states.

While there is an intent to increase spend on health care, the draft policy also stresses on the role of private sector. While the public sector is to focus on preventive and secondary care services, the document recommends contracting out services like ambulatory care, imaging and diagnostics, tertiary care down to non-medical services such as catering and laundry to the private sector.

The draft document highlights the urgent need to improve the performance of health systems, with focus on improving maternal mortality rate, controlling infectious diseases, tackling the growing burden of non-communicable diseases and bringing down medical expenses among other things.

Maternal mortality currently accounts for 0.55% of all deaths and 4% of all female deaths in the 15 to 49 year age group.

The policy statement also assures universal access to free drugs and diagnostics in government-run hospitals. However, it proposes to pose public health system as pre-paid services instead of social service.

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Rammohan (Hyderabad)

Right to health (possible only through clean air, clean water, walkable cities/towns and quite surroundings free from light pollution and odour pollution) act is even more essential than right to information act and right to good governance act.



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The draft National Health Policy, 2015 has proposed a target of raising public health expenditure to 2.5 % from the present 1.2% of GDP.



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Good initiative by Modi Govt.



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mahajan ()

health insurances should be of low coast and moderate so the private sector people can be benefited



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