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सचिव

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भारत सरकार
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय
Government of India
Department of Health and Family Welfare
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Do No.Secy.(HFW)/JS(LA)/2022
1st January, 2022

Dear Colleague,

In the context of the spread of Variant of Concern (VoC) i.e., Omicron, the world is currently reporting the highest ever surge in COVID-19 cases. In India, the case trajectory is also showcasing an upward trend with 16,764 cases reported on 31st Dec, highest ever single day rise in past 70 days. Many developed nations in Europe & Americas are reporting a significant rise in new cases in the past few weeks, which indicates high transmissibility of the virus.

Therefore, it is imperative to re-emphasize the significance of timely and swift upgradation of health infrastructure in all States/UTs, as highlighted in my previous letters, as well as multiple VCs held by the Centre with States. This becomes all the more important since with the sudden increase in cases, we may start seeing a stressed Health Infrastructure.

States have already been advised to ensure health system preparedness by utilizing the existing ECRP-II budget under the different components (for creation of additional Isolation Beds & Field Hospitals, ICU Beds, Paediatric Excellence Centres, Availability of Oxygen, Ambulances, Drugs & Diagnostics, Human Resources and Tele-Consultation Platforms) at the earliest.

1. To address a potential surge in cases, with a view to ensure preparedness States are advised to initiate creation of field/ makeshift hospitals to augment availability of health infrastructure. This can be done with coordination with DRDO & CSIR as well as the private sector, corporations, NGOs, etc. This will aid the process of rapid creation of field hospitals or temporary hospital set-ups. States may also consider leveraging hotel rooms and other accommodations linked with the COVID dedicated hospitals in Government and private sector to cater to patients having mild to moderate symptoms of Covid-19, as was also done in some States during the earlier surge in cases.
2. A large number of positive cases may be eligible for home isolation. These cases would require effective follow up and a clearly defined mechanism for prompt shifting to a health facility in case of deterioration in their health situation. It is particularly important that all states should monitor their home isolation protocol and its actual implementation at the field level. Special teams be constituted to monitor all home isolation cases, call centres / control rooms must aid outbound calling for monitoring such patients and ensuring that all such cases can be shifted to an appropriate health facility through dedicated ambulances.
3. All States must ensure that control rooms at district level or sub district / ward level are made functional. A clearly defined mechanism to access testing, ambulance and hospital

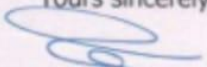
beds needs to be put in place and communicated to the public at large. A mechanism wherein citizen can call and get ambulance and a bed in a transparent manner needs to be operationalised. The call centres, District or State level Dashboards/Portals can play an important role in organizing the same.

4. States are also requested to ensure that the existing Covid dedicated health infrastructure is revisited and necessary action to ensure its operational readiness be taken. A clear focus on rural areas and pediatric cases must also be maintained. States need to regularly review the availability of required logistics, oxygen availability and buffer stock of drugs across all health facilities in the state. Immediate action to monitor the availability of HR and the orientation on the clinical management protocol through the State Centre of Excellence need to be taken up.
5. To contain the spread of infection, the implementation of containment activities at the field level is essential. Need for effective contact tracing coupled with quarantine of contacts including facility quarantine for high risk and comorbid contacts shall be taken up. Sufficient number of quarantine facilities shall accordingly be planned across the State.

This is the critical time to strengthen all our efforts in curbing the spread of infection and I am sure that with your continued support and cooperation, we will be able to maintain the momentum and build on the progress made so far. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will continue to provide requisite support to the States/UTs in the ongoing and collective efforts against COVID-19.

Harm Legard.

Yours sincerely,


(Rajesh Bhushan)

Chief Secretaries/Administrators of all States/ UTs

CC: ACS/Pr.Secy./Secy.(H) of all States/UTs