

First small step for private sector engagement, giant leap for improved reach of quality RMNCH services in Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand is the first of six states that has initiated rollout of the private sector engagement strategy for improved RMNCH services. Under Vridhhi, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Punjab in addition to Uttarakhand will be developing and institutionalizing state specific Public Private Partnership (PPP) strategy for qualified practitioners over the next six months. JSI, through Vridhhi has undertaken extensive background work, including assessments, advocacy meetings and identified state focal points from the existing professional associations of paediatricians, obstetricians and gynaecologists (IAP/NNF and FOGSI) in order to have an informed and expedited approach for PPP development.

After a national level orientation meet for the state focal points for all six states and resource persons from IAP/NNF and FOGSI in mid-July, Uttarakhand launched the initiative with training on identified gaps in PPP for private practitioners in and around the capital city Dehradun. Due to the difficult terrain of the state, most private practitioners are concentrated in this region. The state has over 100 FOGSI members and nearly 200 IAP members. The first batch of training attended by over 40 private practitioners was held under the aegis of the Director General of Health Services (Dr. Rawat), Uttarakhand and Dr. Gambhir (President, NNF), Dr Girija Wagh (FOGSI). Government representation ensured a two way dialogue on the PPP challenges and joint way forward. The training benefitted from having representatives from FOGSI, IAP and IMA to address all issues under the RMNCH umbrella of services.



Opening session lead by the DGHS (Dr. Rawat) and representatives of NNF (Dr. Gambhir), FOGSI (Dr. Wagh) and IMA (Dr. Khanna). Also on dais: Dr Pant (FOGSI, Dehradun) and DR. Semwal (IAP, Dehradun). Session moderated by Dr. Maknikar (JSI)

These representatives along with Dr. Sudhir Maknikar (Project Director, JSI), Dr. Utkarsh Sharma (PPP MNCH Consultant), and Dr. Nitin Bisht (Team Lead, SRU Vridhhi project, IPEG) elucidated the RMNCH guidelines to the participants who further discussed in groups the key gaps and action areas that they could potentially address and improve their engagement in PPP schemes/ programs.



Key highlights were participants' increased interest in facility accreditation, acceptance to sharing specific data with the government periodically and on a government endorsed format, willingness to participate in PPP dialogue through web based platforms (including membership to a closed facebook group) and greater government interaction through monthly meetings, visits of government representatives to private facilities.

The approach of reaching private practitioners through professional associations is a huge leverage for Vriddhi as it permits utilizing existing private sector infrastructure for such cost effective trainings, increases reach to practitioners through the extensive membership and thereby reduces investment in reaching out to so many practitioners in absence of such associations and the goodwill generated by these associations helps in bringing in government stakeholders as well.

In Uttarakhand, the 40 trained practitioners are the starting point for rippling benefits of increased PPPs, accreditation and quality improvement and building trust between government and private practitioners. Five owners of private nursing homes are interested in enrolling their hospitals under various NHM schemes (JSY, JSSK, RSBY etc). In addition, to improve quality of care in their hospitals, they are willing to a joint supportive supervision by members of FOGSI, IAP, state government and Vriddhi team to monitor quality assurance parameters as per their respective professional association's standards. Agreement has been reached to share all relevant MNCH information to the project as well as with State NHM.