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"The planning commission had set up a high-level expert group on universal health coverage. The Centre has accepted the recommendations of the group and accordingly guidelines are being issued," a senior official told TOI on Saturday.

Centre plans more doctors for better healthcare
Prafulla Marapakwar, TNN Aug 27, 2012, 02.20AM IST

Tags: Healthcare | doctors | centre

MUMBAI: On the recommendation of a high-level expert group, the Centre has drafted an ambitious plan to increase the number of doctors for providing better healthcare. Against the current doctor-population ratio of 1:2000, the Centre has proposed to increase availability of doctors to 1:1000, in a time-bound period.

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The official said, it was found that the acute shortage of doctors has had an adverse impact on the mortality rate. To address the shortage of doctors, specialists and faculty, the official said the Centre has relaxed the norms for setting up a medical college in terms of requirement of land, faculty, staff, bed strength and basic infrastructure. While the teacher-student ratio has been relaxed to increase the seats at the post-graduate level, it has been proposed to raise the intake capacity at the MBBS level from 150 to 250.

Further, it has been proposed to increase the age limit from 65 to 70 years for appointment, extension and re-employment against posts of teachers, dean, principal and director in medical colleges. In addition, the Centre will provide financial support to state medical colleges under the scheme to increase post-graduate seats or for starting new PG courses. "The Centre has also proposed to grant financial assistance under the National Rural Health Mission for appointment of staff on a contractual basis," he said.

Maharashtra will be the major beneficiary of the Centre's new policy. "All will depend on the influence of our chief minister, health and medical education minister. If they succeed, Maharashtra will get more grants for strengthening our colleges. We expect that the present intake capacity will increase from 3,400 to 4,500 if the central scheme is implemented," he said.

A former dean said the new policy to address the issue of shortage of doctors has been welcomed by all sections, but it's high time that the Centre and the state government take a fresh look at starting new medical colleges. In Mumbai and the suburbs, there are 38 medical, dental, unani, ayurveda, homoeopathy and nursing colleges, while there are more than a dozen districts where there is not even a nursing college. Take the case of Naxal-dominated Gadchiroli, Gondia, Bhandara and Chandrapur districts, where even routine medical facilities are not available. "These districts don't have even a nursing college. While drafting the new policy, we must ensure equitable distribution of medical facilities. Our present policy concentrates on providing more facilities in urban areas," the former dean said.

He also said though the state government had proposed to set up new medical colleges in Chandrapur, Nandurbar and Alibaug, no decision has been taken so far for obvious political reasons.
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It should be better doctors for more healthcare. Do you agree?

JAGDIP H VAISHNAV (MUMBAI)
27 Aug, 2012 08:56 AM
It has been noticed that, gov't/state run Hospitals are not well equipped with surgical instruments, life support instruments, even Hospitals are not well maintained. Present it is established fact that Hospitals/ Doctors charge more to Inured patient, such patients are unnecessarily retained for more days in the hospitals, even insured patients are not being admitted without palcing security dposit by private/trust run hospitals These issues have remained unresolved for more then 3 years