

Proceedings of the Meeting of the Task Group on “Health and Medical Education”

The first meeting of the Task Group on “Health and Medical Education” constituted under the chairmanship of Prof. K. K. Talwar, Chairman Medical Council of India (MCI), was held in the office of Punjab Governance Reforms Commission at 4:00 PM on 16th June 2012.

The following were present at the meeting:

1. Prof. K. K. Talwar, Chairman MCI, GOI, New Delhi
2. Ms. Vini Mahajan, IAS, PS, H&FW and Member Secretary Task Group
3. Ms. Anjali Bhawra, Secretary, MER
4. Prof. Rajesh Kumar, HoD, School of Public Health, PGI, Chandigarh
5. Prof. Meenu Singh, Head, Division of Pediatrics, Pulmonology & Allergy, PGI, Chandigarh
6. Prof. Ravi Gupta, Deptt. of Orthopaedics, GMCH, Chandigarh
7. Dr. Satwant Bhalla, PCMS (retd.)
8. Dr. Gajender K. Dewan, Dy. Medical Supdt. GMSH

2. Ms. Vini Mahajan welcomed the members and said that the previous recommendations of PGRC on the subject of “Health and Medical Education” had been appreciated greatly and this time we aspire to bring more reforms in the health sector for the benefit of the people.

3. Dr. Rajesh Kumar stated that health sector is a very important sector and calls for serious attention for improvements. He stressed the need for increasing spending on healthcare, improving its utilization and ensuring universal coverage. Public sector medical institutions should provide best medical facilities in order to benefit the poor patients. This will also put pressure on the private medical institutions/hospitals to reduce the charges/fees of providing the services. The central grants should be utilized for improvements of health sector in judicious and planned manner.

4. Dr. Meenu Singh endorsed that in order to provide best and affordable medical facilities to the people public health institutions need to be strengthened and good networking of the medical institutions/hospitals/PHCs is essential.

5. Ms. Anjali Bhawra expressed that besides having good infrastructure and equipment in the medical institutions/hospitals, it is equally important to ensure the availability of staff. She said that issue of providing incentives for research needed to be looked into.

6. Dr. Satwant Bhalla endorsed the need for proper HR planning and deployment.

7. Prof. Ravi Gupta stressed the need for proper functioning of the hospitals/PHC so that people do not have to travel long to reach the good medical institutions in case of any emergency. He also mentioned that the concept of *Jan Aushadhi* has failed because of the very short list of generic drugs available at the stores.

8. After detailed deliberations, it was decided that in the first instance the Group may work towards recommending facility standards at different levels of public health institutions ranging from District Hospitals to Sub-centres. The facilities would include human resource, drugs, equipment and infrastructure. The facility standards may be suggested at 2 levels; a minimum level and a desired level. Along with standards at each facility, the Group may also make recommendations with regard to the proper networking of these institutions, including through telemedicine.

9. Dr. Rajesh Kumar apprised that a facility study of Fatehgarh Sahib district was under consideration in PGIMER. He was therefore, requested to lead this effort, in association with Dr. Meenu Singh, Dr. Ravi Gupta and other interested members, and come up with a draft proposal for the consideration of the Group.

10. As a part of this exercise, the Group would also examine the Essential Drug List (EDL) drawn up by the Department of Health, particularly in the context of the intent of the Government of Punjab to introduce guaranteed free supply of drugs as per the EDL at all public health facilities. The Department of Health & Family Welfare would provide necessary logistic and other support required by the Task Group and its members.

11. The Group also observed that there is need to carefully examine regulation in the health care sector. The Clinical Establishment (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010 was discussed in this context and it was decided to examine the provisions of this Act carefully to recommend regarding the regulatory approach that should be taken in the State of Punjab. The Department of Health would put out a concept note to facilitate discussions.

12. The Group also took note of the need to ensure proper deployment of human resource in the public health facilities. The Department of Health would put out a proposed placement policy for doctors for the consideration of the Group.

13. The Chairman suggested that issues relating to Medical Education be discussed in a separate meeting. It was also agreed that work on the issues discussed with regard to Health Department would be taken up immediately and reviewed in the next meeting to be held in the month of July, 2012.

14. The meeting ended with thanks to all the participants.
