

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 882  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2024**

**SCREENING OF CERVICAL CANCER**

**882: SHRI PRAVEEN PATEL:  
DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE:  
SHRI NARESH GANPAT MHASKE:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government acknowledges low cervical cancer screening, with only 1.9% of women aged 30-49 screened in the country;
- (b) the reasons for delay in including HPV vaccine in universal immunization program;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to address the shortage of trained personnel and inadequate infrastructure for cancer screening at primary health centres;
- (d) the details of the plans to switch from VIA to WHO-recommended HPV DNA testing for screening of cervical cancer; and
- (e) the corrective measures taken by the Government to increase awareness and reduce stigma associated with cervical cancer screening in rural areas?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a) to (c) : Screening of common NCDs including common cancers (viz. oral, breast and cervical) is an integral part of service delivery under Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. As on 9th July 2024, 1,73,546 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been operationalized throughout India. As per National NCD Portal 4.71 Cr Women have been screened for cervical cancer.

In June, 2022 National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI) had recommended the introduction of HPV vaccine in the Universal Immunization Program for 9 to 14 year old adolescent girls. The interim Union budget 2024-2025 stated to encourage vaccination for girls in age group of 9 to 14 years for prevention of Cervical Cancer.

The Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, provides technical and financial support to the States/UTs under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD), as part of National Health Mission (NHM), based on the proposals received from the States/UTs and subject to the resource envelope. The programme focusses on strengthening infrastructure, human resource development, health promotion & awareness generation for Cancer prevention, early diagnosis, management and referral to an appropriate level of healthcare facility for treatment of the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), including Cancer.

A population-based initiative for prevention, control and screening for common NCDs i.e., diabetes, hypertension including three common cancers (oral cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer) has been rolled out in the country under NHM and also as a part of Comprehensive Primary Health Care. Under the initiative, persons more than 30 years of age are targeted for their screening for the three common cancers. Screening of these common cancers is an integral part of service delivery at Ayushman Arogya Mandir. Prevention, control & screening services are being provided through trained frontline workers [Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) & Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife (ANM)].

The Department of Health Research has informed that National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR) is the designated nodal centre for training in Cancer Screening since 2019 and nodal training center for training in colposcopy [Indian Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology (ISCCP)] and has trained more than 2000 healthcare providers including gynaecologists, medical officers, dentists, nurses and ASHAs in cancer screening and is continuing to collaborate with State governments.

(d): At present switching from Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA) to HPV DNA testing for cervical cancer screening is not under consideration of the Government.

(e): Preventive aspect is strengthened under Comprehensive Primary Health Care through Ayushman Arogya Mandir scheme by promotion of wellness activities and targeted communication at the community level. Other initiatives for increasing public awareness about Cancer and for promotion of healthy lifestyle includes observation of National Cancer Awareness Day (7th November) and World Cancer Day (4th February) and use of print, electronic and social media for continued community awareness. In addition, NP-NCD gives financial support under NHM for awareness generation (IEC) activities for Cancer to be undertaken by the States/UTs as per their Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs).

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