

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:236
ANSWERED ON:04.12.2009
DECLARATION OF EPIDEMIC AND PANDEMIC DISEASES
Agarwal Shri Jai Prakash

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

- (a) the criteria for declaring a disease as an epidemic or a pandemic;
- (b) the diseases declared as an epidemic or a pandemic during the last five years, State/UT-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has set up any emergency response system to deal with such diseases in the wake of swine-flu;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to deal with such situations without disrupting regular activities of the hospitals and threatening safety of other patients?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 236 FOR 4TH DECEMBER, 2009

(a) An epidemic is a sudden increase in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected in the population of a specific area. A pandemic is declared when an epidemic has spread to several countries or continents, usually affecting large number of people.

(b) During the last five years, Pandemic Influenza A H1N1 (swine flu) is the only disease that has been declared as a Pandemic by WHO.

(c) & (d): Yes, Madam.

In 2004, Government of India established an Integrated Disease Surveillance System in order to detect early warning signals of impending outbreaks and help initiate an effective response in a timely manner. Further, within the Ministry there is an 'Emergency Medical Relief' Division that attends to public health emergencies such as swine flu. This division co-ordinates all such activities at the national level.

(e) All States have been requested to open a large number of screening centres and strengthen isolation facilities including critical care facilities at district level. For example, in the case of Swine flu, guidelines have been issued for triage and categorization of patients. After screening at the dedicated centres, patients without complications are recommended for home care. The health care workers in screening centres, isolation wards and critical care facilities use personal protective equipments and follow standard infection control practices. The training programme at all levels emphasize on hospital infection control practices.