

NATHEALTH urges centre to rope in private sector to scale up COVID-19 vaccination drive

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NATHEALTH-Healthcare Federation of India has submitted a set of recommendations to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and NITI Aayog on the urgent need to scale up the vaccination drive by including private diagnostics labs and home care providers in the inoculation process. These steps will not only accelerate vaccination numbers at the community level but will also play a pivotal role to stem rising cases of COVID-19 in India, effectively scaling up numbers and expanding coverage in a short span of time.

In the representation to the Health Ministry, NATHEALTH has suggested involving other healthcare providers with the skilled medical workforce to ramp up to the vaccination drive. Some of the key suggestions submitted along with the rationale to the Government are:

- Involving certified, private diagnostic organisations - this can increase coverage and ensure that the general public has quick access to vaccination, especially those in the high-risk category.
- Phlebotomists at accredited laboratory chains are well-trained to proficiently inoculate the population with utmost compliance under the supervision of MBBS doctors.
- Temporary vaccine centres can be set up in schools, malls, hotels/dormitories, airports, and large corporate houses can be created to conduct the inoculation drive as per the SOPs and operational guidelines of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, which can facilitate vaccine storage, handling, administration and documentation.
- Involving more private home healthcare industry players in order to reduce the cost of care for patients and the burden on the stretched hospitals system - Home healthcare industry has a huge potential in preventing the spread of the COVID infection in current times of surge.
- Creation of satellite, temporary off-site community vaccination clinics/centres managed by home healthcare providers -

These centres outside of hospitals can be set up in community centres, malls, colleges, schools, stadiums, RWAs, offices of large corporations and others.

Dr Harsh Mahajan President, NATHEALTH and Founder and Chief Radiologist, Mahajan Imaging said, "The private sector has supported the government in the fight against the pandemic and these recommendations submitted by NATHEALTH is an effort to further lend active support to the Government. Some hospitals are back to their pre-COVID levels of occupancy and also focusing on non-COVID patients.