

## India's first Global Conference on Adolescent Health to focus on "Investing in Youth for a Healthy New India"

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**IAAH 11th World Congress on Adolescent Health to be held from 27-29 October in New Delhi under the supportive guidance of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**



The World Congress on Adolescent Health is coming to India. Held only once every 4 years, the International Association for Adolescent Health's 11th World Congress on Adolescent Health, 'Investing in Adolescent Health – the Future is Now' will be held in New Delhi, India from 27-29 October 2017.

The world is home to 1.2 billion adolescents, and India has the largest population of adolescents in the world i.e. 253 million. This demographic makes India a potent host for a global conference on this theme.

According to Manoj Jhalani, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, MoHFW "The National Health Mission guidelines on adolescent health are a step forward in ensuring a healthy, young India. The government of India is deeply committed to streamlining efforts to ensure comprehensive approaches to dealing with adolescent health. Through various programmes and initiatives, different aspects of adolescent health including nutrition, sexual and reproductive health, NCDs, mental health and more, are being addressed in tandem with each other, incorporating a much-needed life-course perspective into overcoming public health challenges."

The agenda for Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the new Global Strategy on Women's Children's and Adolescents' Health have brought adolescence to the centre-stage. These agendas recognize the opportunities and contribution of adolescence to achieving a wide array of global health priorities including improvements in communicable diseases (e.g. HIV) and non-communicable diseases, women's health, mental health, nutrition, and more. For example, over half of new HIV cases occur in adolescents, and more than 2 million adolescents are living with HIV. Addressing the global HIV epidemic – and other key global health agendas, will not be achieved without attending better to adolescent health and wellbeing.

According to Vandana Gurnani, Joint Secretary, MoHFW "With the largest number of adolescents in the world, India is being watched by the world with hope, and we must lead the way in setting examples through our commitment to securing the health of young India. The upcoming World Congress, therefore, could not have come at a better time for India."

Dr. Ajay Khera, Deputy Commissioner, MoHFW, says "The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is very happy to support the '11th World Congress on Adolescent Health' being held by the International Association for Adolescent Health (IAAH). We are giving the highest priority to addressing adolescent health issues, and ensuring a healthy and bright future for our adolescents. Programmes like RKSK don't just address maternal and child health needs but also talk about the risks of non-communicable diseases and drug abuse, and the necessity of addressing mental health issues."

The World Congress will cover topical themes through discussions in sessions such as 'Global adolescent health: Opportunities and challenges', 'Programming for adolescent health in India: RKSK and beyond', 'Toward a gendered approach to adolescent health', 'Mental health and adolescents', and more.

The conference which is the first-of-its kind to be held in India will see the participation of prominent global public health experts as well as policy makers.

The World Congress is being organized under the supportive leadership of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. MAMTA Health Institute for Mother and Child (MAMTA) is the lead organisation that is hosting the World Congress with a consortium of partners including Pathfinder International, Population Foundation of India (PFI), Population Services International (PSI), and The YP Foundation. The World Congress also has scientific support from Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP), Federation of Obstetric and Gynecological Societies of India (FOGSI), Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI).

Professor Susan Sawyer, President, International Association for Adolescent Health, says, "This meeting couldn't be better timed, as never before has there been such global recognition of the importance of advancing the health and wellbeing of adolescents, including in India. IAAH is delighted that the 11th World Congress on Adolescent Health is in the country with the largest number of adolescents in the world. A groundswell of professionals, global partners and young people are coming to Delhi from all over the world to share ideas, evidence and actions to advance adolescent health. The world is looking towards India and we are confident this World Congress will deliver."