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Urban Health Mission in three months: Anbumani

Focus on slum dwellers; government to pay insurance premium

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BANGALORE The Centre will launch a National Urban Health Mission at a cost of Rs. 8,000 crore in about three months. The mission will cover all cities and towns with more than one lakh population, Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss said on Friday. To begin with, it would be launched in about 450 cities and towns. It would focus on 5.5 crore slum dwellers.

The government would pay the health insurance premium for slum-dwellers. The private sector as well as NGOs would be involved in reaching out to the masses under the programme, which would work in synergy with the earlier rural health mission. Urban local bodies would monitor implementation in

their jurisdiction.

An Urban Social Health Activist would be appointed for every 200 population. An urban health centre would also be set up for every 50,000 population. Self-help groups of women, Manila Arogya Samitis, would be formed for every 100 households to monitor health issues at the grass roots. The Centre would provide them a seed money of about Rs 2,500.

Dr. Ramadoss was delivering an address at the 12th convocation of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (Nimhans) here.

The Centre was launching an initiative to ensure that ambulances were available within 7-15 minutes of a telephone call anywhere in the country by 2010. A national programme on emergency

and trauma care would soon be launched to ensure this and also improve highway safety at an initial cost of Rs 760 crore.

Ambulances would be available on every 50-km stretch on the highways, trauma centres set up on every 100 km and speciality centres located every 150 km. A telephone facility would be provided on every 5-km stretch.

Road safety

A national road safety board was proposed to be set up. A road safety policy bill was ready to be tabled in Parliament.

Dr. Ramadoss noted that road accidents alone were claiming nearly one lakh lives every year and costing the country nearly Rs. 55,000 crore, amounting to three per cent of the GDP.