



## INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Department of Health Research – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
Government of India

### Press Release

### **Expansion for India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI)** ***ICMR's program will now cover 100 districts across India***

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Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in collaboration with World Health Organization and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, today announced nationwide expansion of their program **India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI)**. Launched in November 2017 IHCI has enrolled more than three lakh patients with high blood pressure in the government health facilities in 25 selected districts of the country in the states of Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Telangana, and Maharashtra. Now **IHCI will expand to 100 districts** across India covering all the states. The project will accelerate the implementation of quality hypertension treatment for over 15 crore population over the next four years and prevent deaths from heart attack, stroke and kidney failure.

Heart attack and stroke are the leading cause of death globally, including India. Uncontrolled high blood pressure or hypertension is the most common reason for sudden heart attack or stroke. In India, one in four adults have high blood pressure. Among people with high blood pressure, only half have been diagnosed and only 1 in 10 have blood pressure under control. As a result, a large number of people develop heart attacks, strokes, and kidney failure while in the productive years of life.

IHCI complements the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke (NPCDCS) of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. IHCI will continue to accelerate the achievement of targets of Government of India by ensuring a continuum of care and give a boost to the ongoing “Ayushman Bharat” program.

Launching the expansion of IHCI, **Dr. Balram Bhargava**, Secretary, Department of Health Research and Director General ICMR said, *“The Government of India has adopted a national action plan for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and has set a target for a 25% reduction in high blood pressure by 2025. With approximately 20 crore adult patients with hypertension in India, more support from all quarters will be needed to help the Government achieve this target. IHCI is a model initiative towards that. Prevention and treatment of hypertension is far safer for patients than expensive interventions like bypass surgery and dialysis.”*

*“Everyone above the age of 30 years should get BP measured once a year and adopt a healthy lifestyle very early in life” Dr. Bhargava added.*

**Dr. Henk Bekedam**, WHO Representative to India, said, *“Hypertension is a silent killer. Treatment of hypertension is simple, effective, easily available and needs to be continued lifelong The World Health Organization has prioritized Universal Health Coverage, and the India Hypertension Control Initiative serves as an excellent example of a free program that improves the health of the Indian people,”*

The project is supported by ‘Resolve to save lives’ – an initiative of Vital Strategies who is the international technical partner to the program.

**IHCI contributes to health system strengthening through:**

1. **Hypertension treatment protocols** to simplify quality patient care in the primary care facilities
2. **Prioritizing adequate quantity of quality medicine and blood pressure monitors**
3. **Comprehensive training** for healthcare workers (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, ANM, mid-level health care providers) on latest practices on hypertension.
4. **Focusing on team-based care** to involve nurses, health workers and ASHAs for counseling and follow up of the patients and to improve adherence to treatment.
5. **Patient-centered services** to improve patient support, reduce reliance on bigger hospitals far away from the patient’s home, increase the utilization of “Health and wellness centers” and primary health centers and reduce the travel and expenditure on medicines.
6. **Easy-to-use information systems** strengthen the culture of accountability and continuous improvement which can be applied to other health conditions as well.
7. **Monitoring of all the health facilities and prompt feedback** to the program managers to bridge the gaps in a timely manner.

*For more details:*

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**About ICMR:** *The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), New Delhi, is the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research, is one of the oldest medical research bodies in the world. ICMR’s research priorities align with the National health priorities. These efforts are undertaken with a view to reduce the total burden of disease and to promote health and well-being of the population. ICMR promotes biomedical research in the country through intramural as well as extramural research.*

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