**A landmark step**

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Good health is pivotal to mankind’s well-being and happiness since it contributes significantly to prosperity and even economic progress. A healthy population is more productive, earns more and may even live longer. Good health and nutrition plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of a country as well.

The incumbent federal government is fully committed to providing improved health services to its citizens, with a special focus on upgrading and strengthening primary and secondary healthcare facilities in the country. Social protection signifies the capacity of a society to meet the basic needs of its citizens, establish the building blocks needed to enhance the quality of life and create the conditions for all individuals to attain their full potential. Social protection also helps build the resilience of the poor and vulnerable segments of society by supporting them against negative income shocks and in household expenditures, particularly on food, health and education.

[Weekly inflation goes down by 0.08pc](https://nation.com.pk/11-Feb-2022/weekly-inflation-goes-down-by-0-08pc)

Ehsaas, a flagship social protection programme launched by the incumbent federal government, is the biggest and boldest programme ever launched with the purpose of uplifting marginalised people. It improves food security, helps in poverty reduction and inequalities. Many initiatives, such as Kafalat, Emergency Cash, Undergraduate Scholarship, Nashonuma, Langars, Interest Free Loans, Amdan, and several others have already been launched under the overall umbrella of Ehsaas.

Health sector facts and figures in Pakistan are not as commendable and appreciable as they should have been in a developing country. Pakistan, according to officially available facts and figures, has around 1282 hospitals, 133,707 hospital beds and a population per bed of more than 1600.

Healthcare facilities are comparatively better in the urban areas as compared to the rural areas. Rural areas have facilities that are not commendable numbers and the situation is worsened by the bitter fact that the doctors do not like to go and serve in the rural areas despite postings.

[WB briefs on current 54 projects worth US$ 12.4bn of Pakistan](https://nation.com.pk/11-Feb-2022/wb-briefs-on-current-54-projects-worth-us-dollar-12-4bn-of-pakistan)

Then, one cannot help but to laud and appreciate the launch of the Naya Pakistan’s Qaumi Sehat Card as a landmark step. Under this phenomenal insurance facility, the people are provided free medical treatment in government and private hospitals. This will be available only in the case of hospitalisation for the treatment of several diseases related to the heart, cancer, neurological surgeries, accident, trauma and other ailments.

Prime Minister Imran Khan distributed the Sehat Cards amongst a good number of people including women at a function in Islamabad. The initial total cost of Rs450 billion will be incurred by the national exchequer on this rather very ambitious health insurance program, the first of its kind in the country.

The PM said on the occasion that the universal health coverage facility in Pakistan is indeed a landmark step to accommodate the people with the national exchequer bearing the burden of expensive medical treatment. The philosophy behind the Qaumi Sehat Card was in line with the goals of a socio-welfare state. National security is in fact also linked with the welfare of the people.

[Rise to the Challenge with the All-New Redmi Note 11 Series](https://nation.com.pk/11-Feb-2022/rise-to-the-challenge-with-the-all-new-redmi-note-11-series)

Qaumi Sehat Card holders can avail the medical treat facilities in the public and private hospitals of their choice anywhere in the country. The PM quite emphatically stated that the National Health Card will prove to be a defining moment in encouraging the private sector to join the medical network, especially in the rural areas of the country. It will provide medical treatment facilities and in the process, also create an environment of competition for the public sector hospitals to improve their services.

Another good news was also announced on the occasion. Accordingly, the government is also establishing as many as five mother and child hospitals in the country in view of the high mortality rate of neonatal and pregnancy complications. The locations of these healthcare facilities have not been disclosed as of yet.

There is a general misconception about the National Health Card that the card holder will be given Rs.1 million in cash. This is absolutely wrong and is like one which also wrongly prevails over the years that the parliamentarians—i.e. MNAs and MPAs—are large sums of cash for development within their constituencies. The National Health Card holder will be given only for availing the indoor medical treatment of up to Rs.1 million annually, which the federal government will be paying directly to the concerned hospital.

[Whole world praised govt's policies to curb Covid-19: PM Imran](https://nation.com.pk/11-Feb-2022/pdm-decides-to-bring-no-trust-motion-against-pti-govt)

While appreciating this positive initiative in the right direction by the federal government through Prime Minister Imran Khan, this scribe would like to advise the Qaumi Sehat Card holders in their own benefit that after receiving the health card, they should, at the earliest, seek information from the official quarters concerned as how to use and avail the medical treatment facility. Special National Health Cards counters are being established in more and more public and privates hospitals in this regard.