

Health
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37 new health schemes in ADP

Health budget increased to Rs 3.3b ■ Rs 500m allocated to reforms

By Waqar Gillani

LAHORE: The health allocation in the Punjab Annual Development Plan for 2005-06 has increased from Rs 2 billion to Rs 3.3 billion, with a new head of Rs 500 million for the Health Sector Reforms Programme.

The 65 percent increase in health budget will fund the health projects (80 ongoing and 37 new ones) under the 10th 2020 programme. The total amount allocated for the health schemes is Rs 1.96 billion. The Health Sector Reforms Programme will upgrade the district headquarters hospitals, district headquarters hospitals, district health centres and basic health units and set up a service monitoring and delivery partnership with the Punjab Rural Support Programme.

Other important development initiatives for the new fiscal year are the establishment of organ transplant centres and institutes of cardiology in Faisalabad (Gujranwala) and Rawalpindi and the extension of Punjab Emergency Services Project, active in Lahore, to the rest of the province.

The government has given

Medical education	151.7	179.1
Teaching hospitals	998.3	1,519
Health sector reforms	0	500
Accelerated Programme for Social Delivery	275	466.8
Preventive Healthcare Programme	456.5	578
Miscellaneous (Including THQ hospitals)	118.2	57.2
Total	2,000	3,300

ADP 2004-05 (Rs million)	ADP 2005-06 (Rs million)
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special attention to preventive health services and has set new goals for the next year, such as the strengthening of primary healthcare, development of mother and child healthcare facilities, emergency ambulance services, improvement in medical education, strengthening of tertiary healthcare services and provision of modern medical equipment.

The allocations have been made keeping in view the primary objectives of the government in the health sector like reducing maternal mortality rate, reducing infant mortality rate and supporting the 'referral backup system'.

New schemes in the health sector include the construction of a cold morgue in King Edward Medical College, modernisation of AVH Block in

Mayo Hospital, establishment of Institute of Reproductive Health, Lady Aitchison Hospital, Lahore, construction of Jinnah Hospital's fourth floor, upgrade of Lahore General Hospital's Neurosurgery Unit, establishment of Bone Marrow Transplant Centre and Renal Transplant Unit in Children Hospital, construction of Diabetic Management Unit at Services Hospital, establishment of Wazirabad Institute of Cardiology, Gujranwala, establishment of Institute of Cardiology, Faisalabad, establishment of a 50-bed hospital at Talaganag, Chakwal, establishment of DNA Test Laboratory at Punjab Chemical Examiner, Lahore and establishment of Emergency Services Academy at Lahore.

Muslim states doing little to stem AIDS tide

By P. Parameswaran

Health
Down
1/7/05

WASHINGTON: An Aids crisis is threatening to overwhelm many predominantly Muslim countries but their leaders remain in a state of denial and are doing little to stem the deadly problem, a pioneering study says.

In one of the most comprehensive reports on Aids covering the Muslim world, experts warned of serious repercussions if governments continued to sweep the problem under the carpet.

In a report released by the Seattle-based think tank, the National Bureau of Asian Research, they said "if leaders continue to ignore the problem, Aids could debilitate or even destabilize some of these societies by killing large numbers of people in the 15 to 49-year age group."

This would deprive the Muslim countries of some of their best, brightest, and most economically productive members, said Laura Kelley and Nicholas Eberstadt in the report.

A private infectious disease specialist, Kelley had previously undertaken Aids research for the US National Intelligence Council as well as other diseases for the USAID, the principal foreign aid agency of the United States, while Eberstadt is a scholar at American Enterprise Institute, a conservative Washington-based think tank.

"An important take home message for all Muslim nations is that real behaviours on the streets are sometimes in marked contrast to the expected behaviours of good Muslims and that is something that leaders in these countries must deal with," Kelley told AFP.

The report said that even though the Muslim world was home to behaviours such as premarital sex, adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, and intravenous drug use — which help spread the HIV virus that causes AIDS — many governments have been slow to respond to the rapidly spreading disease.

"What is especially troubling to behold is the reluctance to admit that Muslims engage in exactly those same dangerous behaviours that support the transmission and spread of HIV/AIDS elsewhere," it said, blaming "deeply rooted cultural and religious attitudes.

"This reluctance even to recognize the problem will only accelerate the epidemic and make it more difficult for the international community to provide meaningful support and treatment," the report said.

"We would have thought the Muslim world was in a sense vaccinated from this kind of pandemic but in fact the dreadful news is that it is not, said Michael Birt, the director of National Bureau of Asian

Research's center for health.

"Now with the Muslim world becoming involved, it's truly a global crisis," he told AFP.

Kelley proposed "sweeping legal changes" to reduce the social stigma associated with the disease and protect the Aids sufferers in Muslim nations "to ensure them medical treatment, employment and discourage suicide."

The Muslim world of more than one billion people covers three continents — from Albania and Turkey in Europe, across countries bordering the Sahara in Northern Africa, and through the Persian Gulf and South Asia to Malaysia and Indonesia in the east, the report said.

Officially, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates the total HIV population of North Africa, the Middle East, and predominantly Muslim Asia at nearly one million people.

At the end of 2003, UNAIDS estimated that up to 420,000 in Mali, 180,000 people in Indonesia, 150,000 in Pakistan, and 61,000 in Iran had HIV/AIDS.

"Those numbers, however, are severely understated," Kelley and Eberstadt said in a separate report on Foreign Policy magazine, published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington.

They said UNAIDS figures depended upon surveillance

data — "thus a lack of information can be taken as a lack of infection."

UNAIDS data on the number of people living with HIV/AIDS is completely missing for Afghanistan, Turkey, and Somalia, "all nations with large numbers of at-risk populations," they said.

The study cited Iran and Bangladesh as among Muslim governments that were combating the problem effectively.

"Iran's President Mohammad Khatami and his administration have been very forthcoming about the extent of the epidemic and the urgent need to control the further spread of the disease," it said.

"Perhaps surprising, given the Iranian regime's conservative reputation, needle exchange programmes also have been offered in high drug-use areas of Tehran, and syringes are now sold over the counter in many pharmacies," the report said.

Kelley said some of Iran's anti-Aids programmes "are more liberal than some overseas programs funded by United States," citing condom distribution as among areas opposed by some Christian groups.

Hopefully, she said, the incoming administration of President Mahmood Ahmadinejad would continue and expand upon the education and prevention efforts.—AFP