

**Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
National Health Authority
Government of India
Press Release**

**Testing and treatment of COVID -19 now available for free under Ayushman Bharat
Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana**

New Delhi, April 4, 2020: To strengthen the country's response to COVID -19 pandemic, the Government of India has decided to make the testing and treatment for COVID-19 available under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM JAY). The testing and treatment of COVID -19 is already available for free in the public facilities. Now, more than 50 crore citizens, eligible under the Government of India's health assurance scheme will be able to avail free testing through private labs and treatment for COVID -19 in empaneled hospitals.

The empaneled hospitals can use their own authorized testing facilities or tie up with an authorized testing facility. These tests would be carried out as per the protocol set by Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and by private labs approved/registered by ICMR. Similarly, treatment of COVID-19 by private hospitals will be covered under AB-PMJAY.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare said, "In this unprecedented crisis we have to very actively involve the private sector as a key partner and stakeholder in the fight against COVID-19. Making testing and treatment available under Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY will significantly expand our capacities by including private sector hospitals and labs and mitigate the adverse impact of this catastrophic illness on the poor."

This decision comes with the objective to increase the supply of testing and treatment facilities and increase access to them by roping in the private sector through AB-PM JAY scheme. As per the ICMR guidelines for COVID-19 testing by private laboratories in India, the test is to be conducted by laboratory which has NABL accreditation for real time PCR assay for RNA virus. Laboratory test should be only offered when prescribed by a qualified physician for COVID-19 testing.

This decision will also help attract more private sector players for providing testing and treatment for COVID-19. Active private sector involvement will be critical in case there is a surge in the number of COVID-19 patient that need care. States are in the process of enlisting private sector hospitals that can be converted in to COVID-19 ONLY hospitals.

Information on symptoms, testing and treatment for COVID-19 can be accessed from the website of the MoHFW and by calling the national COVID-19 helpline 1075.

About Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY):

Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM JAY) is the flagship scheme of Government of India that provides a cover of up to Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to over 10.74 Crore poor and vulnerable families (about 53 crore beneficiaries). AB-PM JAY provides cashless and paperless access to services for the beneficiaries at the point of service. Under this scheme there are 1,578 health benefit packages with defined rates. Over 20,000 public and private hospitals have been empaneled across the country to provide inpatient services to the beneficiaries. Since its launch in September 2018,

more than 95 lakh hospital treatments worth nearly Rs. 13,000 Cr have been provided under the scheme. More than 12 crore e-cards have been issued across the 32 States and UTs implementing the scheme.

About: National Health Authority (NHA):

The National Health Authority (NHA) is the apex agency of the Government of India responsible for the design, roll-out, implementation and management of Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM JAY) across the country. NHA functions as an attached office of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and is governed by a Governing board chaired by the Union Minister of Health & Family welfare and has 11 members. Inter-alia, its functions include formulation of PM JAY policies, development of operational guidelines, implementation mechanisms, coordination with state governments, monitoring and oversight, among others.