Strengthening Tuberculosis Care in India

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Strengthening Tuberculosis Care in India: Public-Private Integration and Policy Innovations

Tuberculosis (**TB**) remains a **major public health challenge** in India, accounting for **over 25% of the global burden**. While public hospitals provide **free TB treatment**, they often lack a **patient-friendly environment**. In contrast, private hospitals offer better facilities but **lack standardized treatment protocols**, increasing the risk of **drug-resistant TB**. Addressing these gaps requires a **well-structured Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** to ensure **accessible, quality-assured, and patient-friendly TB care**.

Challenges in Existing Healthcare System

- **Public hospitals:** Free treatment but perceived as **inefficient and overcrowded**.

- **Private hospitals:** Better facilities but **inconsistent protocols and high costs**.

- **Drug-resistant TB (DR-TB):** Restricted medicines available only in public hospitals.

- **Lack of coordination:** Patients switching between sectors **disrupts treatment adherence**.

Key Reforms to Strengthen TB Care

Public-Private Integration

- A **PPP model** with **uniform treatment protocols** and **government-supervised drug distribution**.

- Private hospitals can provide **better patient experiences**, while the public sector ensures **treatment accountability**.

Shorter and Effective Treatment Regimen

- Introduction of the **BPaLM regimen** reduces treatment duration from **24 months to 6 months**.

- Eliminates **painful injectables**, improving **adherence and recovery rates**.

Strengthening Diagnosis and Accessibility

- **Molecular tests (CBNAAT, TrueNat)** ensure **rapid, accurate TB detection**.

- **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs)** act as **decentralized sputum collection centers**, increasing **rural access**.

Enhanced Nutritional and Financial Support

- **Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana (NPY)** support **increased from ₹500 to ₹1,000 per month**, aiding **malnourished TB patients**.

- Expansion of **social protection schemes** to **compensate wage loss** during treatment.

Community Engagement and Stigma Reduction

- **TB Champions (survivors)** share experiences, encouraging **early diagnosis and adherence**.

- Large-scale **awareness campaigns** can **reduce stigma** and misinformation.

Integrating TB Care with General Health Services

- **AI-enabled chest X-rays** for **early detection of TB and coexisting conditions** like COPD.

- **Gender-responsive healthcare strategies** to address **access barriers** for women and vulnerable groups.

Conclusion

A **comprehensive, patient-centered approach** is essential to eliminate TB in India. **Public-private integration**, **standardized treatment**, **stronger financial support**, and **community-driven awareness** will accelerate **India's fight against TB** and set a **global benchmark in healthcare**.