

# NITI Aayog proposes digital backbone for Ayushman Bharat

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In its bid to support the launch of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious Ayushman Bharat, which aims to provide health insurance to around 107.4 million families, the NITI Aayog on Friday made public the consultation draft on National Health Stack.

Developed on the back of Aadhaar-based India Stack, the NHS is imagined as a nationally shared digital infrastructure backbone. The private and public sectors can use it. The stack is expected to boost the creation of health care solutions based on technology.

It envisages multiple registries that record data pertaining to all health sector stakeholders including health care providers such as hospitals, beneficiaries, doctors and even insurers. These datasets are also likely to contain information

about health programmes like information on drugs and interventions, the draft released by the government think tank said.

The draft paper said the idea was to leverage the existing infrastructure like Aadhaar, e-KYC, Digital Locker and the consent framework. The government expects to achieve goals such as nutrition management, disease surveillance, and emergency management and even launch health call centres based on the data collected in the stack. The key components of the stack are national electronic health registries, a coverage and claims platform, a personal health records framework, a national health analytics platform and Digital ID.

These layers come together to form the full health stack, which will be used in many ways. For instance, with the help of personal health registries, people will be able to enter Ayushman Bharat at any

time of the year and avail of the benefits of policies. Similarly, the need for unnecessary tests will reduce because the database of all previous tests will be linked in one place for all individuals. A major thrust is on using smart contracts based on blockchain technology in the claims engine where policies can be digitally signed and verified to make them tamper-proof. The paper claims that these policies can even be claimed completely digitally and with little human intervention. However, a big issue in managing the project is likely to be collecting all this data and bringing it into one place.

For instance, there are already at least three functioning efforts on from the government to collect and digitise health data in the country. The draft envisages its proposed registries becoming the master repositories and merging existing data.