

# Spending on health will go up, says PM

Press Trust of India

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**NEWDELHI:** India is set to increase its public health spending to 2.5% of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Wednesday, as he asserted that women, children and youth will continue to remain at the heart of every policy, programme and initiative of the government.

Addressing the 2018 Partners' Forum here, Modi said the high out-of-pocket expenditure incurred by families to avail medical care in India worried his government and to address the issue, it launched the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, which has a two-fold strategy.

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana provides cashless health insurance cover up to ₹5 lakh per family per year, covering 500 million poor.

"This number is almost equal to the population of Canada, Mexico and the US taken together. We have already provided free treatment worth ₹700 crore to 5 lakh families under this scheme within 10 weeks of its launch," Modi said. The other arm of Ayushman Bharat, Modi said, is the provision of providing comprehensive primary care at a facility near the community, for which the Centre will start 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres



■ Narendra Modi.

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by 2022. The community will also be able to receive free screening and care for common diseases including hyper-tension, diabetes and three common cancers—of breast, cervix and oral. The patients will receive free medicines and diagnostic support close to their homes, he said.

At the event, Modi said the government is set to increase its spending on public health to 2.5% of the GDP. As of now, the country spends 1.15% of the GDP on health.

"This will mean an actual increase of 345% over the current share, in just eight years. We will continue to work for the betterment of people. Women, children and youth will continue to remain at the heart of every policy, programme or initiative," he said. Modi informed that India's immunisation programme, "Mission Indradhanush", will be featured as a success story, among 12 others from all over the world, in the two-day forum.