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Karnataka govt signs 11 MoUs in healthcare sector valued at Rs 4,500 cr

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Karnataka government has inked healthcare projects valued at Rs 4,500 crore for the state. It has signed a total of 11 Memorandum of Understanding during the just concluded two-day Global Investors Meet held in Bangalore.

According to V Umesh, secretary, Karnataka department of medical education, the 11 projects slated to come up would generate 26,000 employment opportunities.

The investments include Sagar Hospital funding a Rs 3,000 crore hospital chain across the state followed by Narayana Hrudayalaya Rs 990 crore in Bangalore Rural. QED Pre-clinical services is investing Rs 5.92 crore in a facility spanning 36 acres in Bangalore Rural. Kamineni Health Services is investing Rs 24.76 crore in a hospital at Bodar to come up on a 196 acre plot. GM Property is investing Rs 40 crore in wellness centre at Kodagu spanning over 400 acres. Narayana Eye Foundation is investing Rs 40 crore for 750 acres of land in Bangalore Rural, Kidney hospital being set up by a private investor with an funding assistance of Rs 4,705 crore will come up on 350 acres in Bangalore Rural.

Highlighting the opportunities for growth in the state, Health Commissioner, DN Nayak said that the sector required medical textile industries to manufacture surgical gowns, gloves, caps among others. Doctors and healthcare staff are at constant risk of exposure to high grade infection like HIV, Hep C and H1N1 requiring huge demand for these products. The state healthcare was looking for an expansion of insurance services which could look at inclusion of chronic illnesses for coverage. There was also a demand for air ambulances to transfer patients during the golden hour of care or for transporting organs for transplant. Going by the increasing number of ageing sick population, the state was looking for investments to come up for setting up of rehabilitation centres for senior citizens. Another area of opportunity was for lab-cum-imaging services and trauma care. On the education front, there was need for setting up centres of excellence.

The state is facing a serious shortage of doctors to work at districts and the government is not in a position to invest and was scouting for private players to set up medical centres in the backward districts of Koppal, Bellary and Gulbarga. There was need for advanced imaging centres to offer diagnosis like orthroscopy and lithotripsy.

According to the state health and family welfare minister B Sriramulu, with 2,258 primary health centres (PHCs), efforts were on to outsource the management expertise for these facilities and the state would reimburse the costs incurred. Currently 54 PHCs are under the outsourced management.

The state government has put forward its interest in private sector to chip in its assistance in terms of finance and expertise to take over the hospitals in Bangalore under the public-private partnership mode.

These are the Indiranagar General Hospital coming up on seven acres of land, a medical centre on 10 acres at HRBR Layout, Hospital at Magadi Road and medical centre at subsidized rates for patients below the poverty line at Banshankari, stated the health commissioner.

Representing the government hospital sector, Dr CN Manjunath, director, Jayadeva Institute of Cardiology said that Karnataka with its corporate and government medical centres could offer affordable treatment for oncology, cardiology and reconstructive surgeries compared to any part of the world.

From the corporate hospital perspective, Vishal Bali, CEO Fortis Limited said that corporate hospitals in the state catered to large chunk of international patients and this was driven only by the confidence in quality of service and expertise.

According to Dr Devi Prasad Shetty, managing director, Narayana Hrudayalaya, that global healthcare is the next big sector for investment. “The healthcare industry has the potential to spend US\$ 4.5 trillion in the US and India's expenditure is estimated at US\$ 1 trillion. Ample business development opportunities existed in this space primarily because it was a key employer and accounted for the largest recruiter of women primarily nurses in India.