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To

All Collectors

Sub: **COVID -19 Situation.**

Madam/ Sir,

I am to inform you that COVID -19 epidemic (earlier called nCov) has now spread to over 80 countries. Of these countries, about 30 have reported local transmission. Three cases were confirmed in Kerala in the month of January, and discharged after recovery. Thereafter, we did not have any case for about four weeks. However, at least 28 new cases have been confirmed in New Delhi, Telengana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan recently, which include some Italian tourists. Hence, there is an urgent need to review our preparedness and take the following additional measures.

2. It is necessary to be fully prepared to contain transmission of infection in the community and also in the health care facilities, in the event we have any confirmed case. Following overarching principles need to be followed in this regard.

- Situation awareness at all levels (State, district, local)
- Informed and timely decision making based on assessment of risk
- Inter-sectoral coordination at all levels
- Strengthening core capacities in surveillance, hospital preparedness, risk communication, logistics management (drugs, N45 masks, PPEs etc.)

3. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has prepared Containment Plan Guidelines for COVID-19. I had earlier circulated it in the District Collectors

WhatsApp group. The same need to be properly understood, disseminated across all stakeholders and followed up scrupulously to contain cluster transmission.

4. As nodal persons for containment operations, you are requested to constitute district level task force consisting of SP, Municipal Commissioner, PD DRDA, CDM&PHO, DSWO etc. and mobilise the entire health, education, ICDS, Revenue & Police (if necessary) for containing cluster transmission. HW(F), AWC, School Teachers, ASHA could be trained to spread awareness in community and assist the district IDSP team in contact tracing in case of confirmed cases.
5. In addition, large public gatherings need to be discouraged and social distancing (staying about 1 metre away from people with flu like symptoms) needs to be actively promoted. People with flu like symptoms need to be advised to stay at home and not contact others. These are simple but very effective measures against all kinds of infection.
6. Hand washing needs to be promoted in a mission mode. People need to be advised to avoid touching face, eyes, nose etc. and wash their hands properly with soap & water at regular intervals. Use of mask by healthy people is not recommended. Use of mask by healthy people gives a false sense of protection. People may avoid taking other precautions. Infected persons may be asked to use triple layer surgical mask to contain infection. Such mask should be disposed after 6-8 hours.
7. Rumours need to be contained. There is no need for any panic. Basic preventive steps and precautionary measures will go a long way in minimising the risks of infection.
8. In the hospitals, especially Medical College & Hospitals and District Headquarters Hospitals, isolation wards need to be set up to isolate the contacts of confirmed cases. The doctors and health workers need to wear N95 masks and PPE while attending to patients. Arrangements are being made to augment the stock of PPE and N95 mask. All Medical Officers, Staff Nurses and other care providers, attendants, etc. need to be well sensitised about the personal protection measures.
9. There is no standard treatment for COVID-19 cases. Appropriate treatment has to be provided based on symptoms. The DMET may be consulted

in this regard. The Medical Officers need to go through various guidelines relating to screening centres, bio-medical waste management, home-based care, collection & transport samples, infection prevention & control during health care, etc. I have advised Director, Public Health to compile a compendium of all relevant guidelines and share it with all MCHs and CDM&PHOs.

10. You are requested to review the emerging situation on a daily basis and take situation specific measures promptly. For any specific or clarification you are advised to contact me, DMET, DHS or DPH, as the case may be.

Yours faithfully,

D 6/3/2020

(N. B. Dhal)

Memo No. 7050 /H.

Dt. 06-03-2020

Copy to All RDCs/ All Superintendents, MC&Hs/ CDM&PHOs for information and necessary action.

D 6/3/2020

Principal Secretary to Government

Memo No. 7051 /H.

Dt. 06-03-2020

Copy to M.D., NHM/ M.D. OSMCL/ Director, PH/ Director, Health Services/ Director, SHIFW for information and necessary action.

D 6/3/2020

Principal Secretary to Government