

**SPEECH OF THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI
PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE
GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT T.D.
MEDICAL COLLEGE**

Alappuzha, Kerala : 16-03-2013

1. It gives me great pleasure to be present here today to inaugurate the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Government T.D. Medical College. This Medical College is located in the town of Alappuzha known as the 'Venice of the East'. During the five decades of its existence, this College has been instrumental in providing quality medical education in Kerala.
2. The T.D. Medical College has produced over 4,200 doctors, who are in the service of needy patients in India and abroad. It is a matter of pride that the alumni of this College have excelled in various fields of medical education, patient care and research, both nationally and internationally.
3. I am happy to note that a series of academic, health awareness and patient care programmes have been planned for this Golden Jubilee year, to reach out to the needy and to provide them with free medical care. This Medical College is also the main agency through which various health and family welfare schemes of the Government are implemented in this district. I am told that an initiative has been launched to make Alappuzha

the first self-sufficient district in Kerala in the field of health care.

4. Ladies and Gentlemen, the high standard of public health in Kerala is known to all. The State has always been proactive in implementing national programmes for control and eradication of diseases.
5. The family welfare programme, universal immunization programme and maternal and child health activities have helped the State reach global benchmarks in the health status of its citizens. The infant mortality rate is 12 per 1000 live births, while the maternal mortality rate is 81 per 1 lakh live births, which are much below the national average.
6. Kerala is a big contributor to the pool of health care professionals, particularly doctors and nurses, in the country. It is a leader amongst Indian states in terms of human development, with the highest literacy rate of around 94 per cent and highest sex ratio of 1,084 females per 1,000 males in the country. The Kerala model of social development, where the Government initiatives are matched by active civic participation, is indeed laudable.
7. Ladies and Gentlemen, the well being of a nation is dependent on the well being of its people. Unless the

health of the population is secured, the productive potential of the country cannot be realized to the full extent. A sound health care system depends on the three pillars of availability, quality and affordability.

8. The National Rural Health Mission was launched in 2005 to address these parameters in our health sector. I am happy to note that a new National Health Mission, combining the rural mission and a new urban mission, is being launched with an outlay of over Rs. 21,000 crore for 2013-14.
9. Despite the progress made in our health care system, we still have great distance to cover. The public sector health service in our country is limited by its reach. Many in our population are dependent on the private sector for delivery of health services.
10. It is burdensome for poor people to access expensive medical treatment, and many fall into the trap of poverty on account of that. The quality of health care delivery by some of the health service providers also leave much to be desired.
11. We must correct this situation by expanding good quality affordable public sector health care facilities. Our public expenditure on health care was 1.04 per cent of GDP during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period.

This should rise to 2.5 per cent of GDP by the end of the Twelfth Plan period if we are to augment public health care in the country in a big way.

12. Augmenting public resources will by itself not automatically translate into expansion of health care infrastructure unless there is adequate number of competent health care professionals to serve this sector. There were about 241 medical professionals – physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists and other professionals – per one lakh population in 2011-12. It is envisaged that this density of medical professionals will increase to 354 by the end of the Twelfth Five Year Plan period.
13. There is urgent need for more institutes of learning for imparting medical education. It is gratifying to note that six AIIMS like institutions are to be set up soon. It is also necessary to increase the capacity of our existing medical schools and nursing colleges and enhance the standard of education in them. I am confident that our public sector medical colleges will meet the twin challenge of greater quantity and better quality.
14. No one should be denied specialty medical treatment due to high costs. We must strengthen the mechanism of health insurance. The Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana that gives beneficiaries cash less in-patient

treatment should provide access to comprehensive primary, secondary and tertiary medical care. The benefits of this scheme should touch every one below the poverty line.

15. Ladies and Gentlemen, most new initiatives are now driven by technology. India is a global leader in information and communication technology. Taking advantage of this, we must build an efficient health information system for universal registration of births and deaths, nutritional surveillance and disease surveillance. A sound data base should come handy for our policy makers to make timely interventions.
16. Satellite-based technology has made it possible for health care to reach the remotest parts of our country. The tele-medicine project has enabled remotely-located health care centres to interact with super specialty hospitals in urban centres for provision of health care consultation to the needy and under-served population.
17. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have envisaged infant mortality rate to reduce from 44 per 1000 live births to 25 by the end of the Twelfth Plan period, and the maternal mortality rate to reduce from 212 per one lakh live births to 100 during this period. These targets are within our reach but for that comprehensive efforts are

essential. A sustainable model of health care with the participation of all stakeholders is the need of the hour.

18. I hope the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the T.D. Medical College will be a platform for exchange of ideas on the issues I have outlined above. I am confident the T.D. Medical college will continue to render outstanding service to society and that your efforts will touch and transform the lives of many people.

19. I wish the year-long celebrations organized by the College all the success.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.
