

National Health Policy

The National Health Policy is an initiative by the Central Government that directs future health programs. The National Health Policy was initially introduced as a guide to the Indian health sector concerning the approach it should take to spread awareness about health & well-being. It also aimed to adopt specific measures to reach the maximum health percentage across all age groups and to ensure the availability of healthcare services to all country people.

The government policy on health has been introduced and updated by the Government of India thrice.

- National Health Policy 1983 by Indira Gandhi Government
- National Health Policy 2002 by Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government
- NHP 2017 by Narendra Modi Government

The central government launched the latest National Health Policy 2017, an upgraded version of the 2002 policy.

National Health Policy 2017

The NHP 2017 focuses on assured healthcare to all by addressing the current challenges. The key points of the National Health Policy 2017 are as follows:

- Assurance-based approach.
- Comprehensive primary health care package
- Health and Wellness Centres
- Free drugs, free diagnostics, and free emergency
- Three-dimensional integration of AYUSH systems
- Effective grievance redressal mechanism
- Increased health expenditure

National Health Policy 2002

The NHP 2002 is an upgraded version of the National Health Policy 1983. The salient features of national health policy 2002 are as follows:

- Approach to Primary Healthcare
- A decentralized system for public health
- Consolidation of all health programs under a single, overarching field expanding and improving public health programs.
- Increased involvement of the private and NGO sectors in the provision of healthcare.
- Rise in government healthcare spending

Objectives of National Health Policy

The National Health Policy 2017 aims to widen the reach of each and every person in the country, promoting complete wellness and health while making all quality healthcare services accessible to all. Since 2002, the national health policy has seen some changes in the basic framework, thereby changing the nature of the approach and the goals to be accomplished. The new goals look something like the following:

- **Dealing with the constantly changing health priorities** - This goal focuses on the constantly increasing rate of non-communicable and transmissible diseases.
- **Managing the health sector expenditure** - As is evident in the current times, medical expenses have been taking a toll on us. Therefore, the National Health Policy 2017 aims to reduce health-related costs and all the medical expenses that make healthcare services inaccessible to half of the population.
- **Contributing to economic growth** - The National Health Policy 2017 also intends to contribute to the economic growth of the country & increase the fiscal capacity.
- **Creating a robust healthcare system** - The policy also aims to strengthen the Indian healthcare industry by implementing new and innovative methods.

Principles of the National Health Policy of India

The National Health Policy in India is a progressive approach by the Indian Government to bring significant growth and development to the healthcare sector by including proper planning and adopting innovative measures by tending to certain specific focus areas with respect to the nation's requirements. Here are a few key principles of the National Health Policy 2017:

- **Equity & Accessibility** - The policy aims to decrease inequity and reach out to every needy section of society. This principle is based on the idea of making healthcare accessible to those who are suffering endlessly due to serious diseases and are unable to bear medical expenses.
- **Ethics & Integrity** - The National Health Policy further aims to promote a transparent system by following high professional standards and taking each step ethically. This policy seems to focus on a professional attitude by not discriminating among the people who need these services the most.
- **Proper Care & Support** - To not degrade the quality of healthcare services, the government policy on health focuses on providing genuine, gender-specific, and safe services to all.
- **All-inclusive Stakeholding** - The government tends to focus on bringing in inclusive partnerships, which translates to a 'multistakeholder' approach. This would also mean participation and cooperation from various other sources, such as academic institutions, the healthcare industry itself, and the non-profit sector.