

Secretary (Labour and Employment) Chairs 20th Meeting of Sub-Committee of ESIC on AYUSH

“Focus should be on providing a more holistic approach to healthcare of ESI Beneficiaries by providing a bouquet of services encompassing both Allopathic and Traditional Systems of Medicine” –
Smt. Dawra

Implementation of New ESIC Policy on Ayush Underway

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Ms. Sumita Dawra, Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE) and Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) presided over the 20th meeting of the Sub-Committee held at ESIC Headquarters, New Delhi on 14.11.2024.

In the meeting, it was emphasised that Ayush systems of medicine are gaining popularity all over the world. The strength of these individual systems of medicine lies in their unique modalities for disease prevention, wellness, and management. The Ayush systems can contribute significantly to the holistic health of ESI beneficiaries.

The 20th Meeting of the Sub-committee under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment focussed upon the implementation of new ESI policy on Ayush – 2023. Other matters discussed included confirmation of the minutes of the 19th meeting of the Sub Committee; and on Action taken report of the last meeting of the Sub Committee. Several important issues regarding execution of the new Ayush policy were put up before the committee for deliberation and consideration.

Smt. Dawra directed that all possible measures should be taken for a speedy, seamless and meaningful implementation of the policy in the best interests of ESI Beneficiaries. She reiterated that this new policy would go a long way in enhancing the reach and quality of the AYUSH services being provided by the ESI Corporation.

It was also reiterated by the Chairperson that it is imperative to foster the growth of traditional systems of medicine and enhance collaboration between Ayush systems and Allopathy. The focus should be on providing a more cohesive and holistic approach to healthcare of IPs and their families.

ESI policy on Ayush – 2023: Salient Features

The policy provides norms for establishment of AYUSH OPD services in ESIS/ESIC. As per the earlier Ayush policies, provision was for running Ayush OPD services through part time doctors & staff whereas

according to the new policy they will be replaced by regular fulltime staff in due course of time. This would manifestly increase the level of commitment of the staff and the quality of care.

As per the policy, there is provision of Indoor Ayurveda treatment by housing 50 bed AYUSH hospitals within 500 bed Allopathic Hospitals. Here in addition to OPD services, patients with ailments required hospitalization will get quality treatment under five specialties that is Kaya Chikitsa (General Medicine), Panchakarma (Biopurificatory medicine), Shalya (Surgery), Shalakya (Ophthalmology and ENT) and Prasuti and Stri Roga (Obstetrics and Gynaecology) under the supervision of Ayurveda physicians with required Post Graduate qualifications. This would immensely enhance the quality of care being provided to the ESI Beneficiaries .

Earlier, Yoga units in ESI institutions were being run by Yoga instructors. As per the new policy, Yoga therapy units will be run by Yoga therapists having higher levels of qualifications and experience. This would enable Insured Persons (IPs) and dependents to get the benefits of quality Yoga Therapy services in ESI institutions.

Panchakarma is essentially a regimen intended to eliminate the toxic elements of the body by enhancing its immunity and decreasing the chances of recurrence of diseases. Kshar-Sutra therapy is time tested, sure, safe and cost-effective method in the management for Ano-rectal disorders. Norms for establishing units for both Panchkarma and Kshar-Sutra units for these therapies are laid down in this Ayush policy to enable strengthening of these services for ESI beneficiaries.

The ESI Corporation is providing medical care services both through modern medicine and AYUSH systems of medicine in accordance with Central Government Policy to promote Ayush systems of medicines. ESI Corporation has facilitated the development of Ayush facilities in a phased manner all over the country.

At present, ESI is running a total of 406 AYUSH units at various locations throughout the country. These comprise 185 Ayurveda units, 91 Homeopathy units, 67 Yoga units, 52 Siddha units and 11 Unani units. An aggregate of 26,68,816 patients attended these units in the course of the year 2023-24.

The meeting was attended by Shri Ashok Kumar Singh, Director General, ESIC and Shri Rupesh Kumar Thakur, Joint Secretary, MoLE. Representatives from employees' associations, the Central Government, State Governments, medical professionals and officers from the ESIC were also present on the occasion.

Background:

In order to provide high quality Ayush health services to ESI beneficiaries through ESI institutions all over India, ESIC has periodically undertaken a number of initiatives to improve the delivery of services.

The latest initiative of ESIC in this regard is the formulation of ESI policy on Ayush – 2023 which was approved in the 193rd meeting of ESI Corporation on 10.02.2024. The policy is regarding expansion of Ayush services in ESI hospitals, dispensaries, and DCBOs with the establishment of Ayush units (OPD services), Ayush Hospitals, Yoga therapy units, Panchakarma units and Kshara-Sutra units.

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