PAHAL Participates in the National Conference on Urban Health

*Indian Institute of Health Management Research, 24th-25th February, 2018*

The International Institute of Health Management Research hosted a conference on Urban Health in New Delhi, on the 24th and 25th of February, 2018, at the IIHMR campus in Dwarka, New Delhi.

The conference created a platform for doctors, healthcare professionals, industry representatives, policymakers and regulators from across the country to discuss vital issues pertaining to urban health and suggest strategies to improve and streamline the system.

IPE Global, in partnership with USAID is implementing the PAHAL Project, which aims to provide catalytic support to growth stage scalable social enterprises in developing affordable & quality healthcare solutions for the urban poor. It is a collaborative platform which seeks to connect, capacitate and catalyze innovative social enterprises focused on improving health outcome. By 2020, the PAHAL initiatives plan to reach 10 million urban poor and aim to reduce out of pocket (OOP) expenditure on health care for underserved urban communities by 30%.

In view of the same, IIHMR invited IPE Global to be part of the conference and share insights on the challenges and opportunities in the urban health sector. The IPE Global team attended the second day of the event.

The event was inaugurated by Dr. Sanjiv Kumar, Director, IIHMR Delhi, who set the stage for the speakers to share their views and experiences. A brief summary of the sessions on day two is as follows:

**SESSION 1: HEALTHCARE FINANCING**

The theme of the first session was “Healthcare Financing”, which was chaired by Mr. Gautam Chakraborty, Specialist, Healthcare Financing at USAID. He introduced the audience to the healthcare issues pertaining to the urban population in India and that the network of healthcare operations in India is non-linear. He spoke on the importance of an ecosystem approach for health focused social enterprises that goes beyond capital support to include technical assistance and advisory for ensuring affordable and quality care inclusive of preventive/primary care.

**Mr. LM Singh**, Project Director, PAHAL and Head- Impact Investments at IPE Global, was the keynote speaker for this session. He laid emphasis on the need for affordable care, and the opportunity that social enterprises present to cater to this segment of the market. He said, “A system for wellness, not illness needs to be designed, and money needs to be aligned to preventive care before secondary and tertiary care.”

**Mr. Bhushan Tuli**, Vice President, Equipment Finance, Dewan Housing Finance Limited highlighted that finance is the most important aspect for any social enterprise to sustain. He spoke on DHFLs alignment with project PAHAL to provide affordable loans to social enterprises in healthcare for expansion of their facilities and services. He said that the primary reason that some of these facilities are not being able to secure a loan is due to the
poor credit worthiness of the borrowers. As a result of the partnership with PAHAL they aim to provide an ecosystem support to these enterprises which will include technical assistance and not just operate as any other bank giving loans.

Mr. Shailesh Kumar, Partner, Ajooni Impact Investment Advisors, explained the concept of impact funds, and the opportunity rich environment that India presents for impact funds to flourish. He introduced the audience to the recently launched Pahal Health Fund, sponsored by IPE Global, which will be investing in social enterprises focused on improving health outcomes by taking an ecosystem approach and at the same time produce a financial return.

The last speaker for this session was Mr. Gaurav Tripathi, Product Lead, Aditya Birla Capital. He stated that a comprehensive insurance product is needed to reduce the out of pocket expenditure on health. He said, “Incentivising primary care patients can reduce excessive hospitalization, thereby making insurance viable for the poor”.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:
- Need for expanding credit for affordable healthcare markets
- Impact funds as an innovative approach to improving healthcare
- Need for an ecosystem approach combining blended finance and technical support to help social enterprises achieve scale
- Comprehensive insurance as a solution to improve access and reduce health expenses

SESSION 2: CLIMATE FOCUS IN URBAN HEALTH AND CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES

The theme of the next session was “Climate focus in Urban Health and Child Friendly Cities”, chaired by Dr. JP Narain, Former Director, WHO.

Dr. Sarabjit Singh, Disaster Management Specialist, UNICEF spoke of the lack of capacity in the urban systems to deal with climate change variability. He said - “Thresholds and trigger points in urban areas need to be understood, and investments must be made to build ecosystems in cities.” He said that there is a need to extend focus beyond disasters for better health planning.

Dr. Vikas Desai, Secretary General, Urban Health Society of India drew the link between climate change and health, and felt that communities need to be brought into action to address these challenges. She said, “Health is only a part of the impact of climate change, but the risk of endangerment increases the motivation of decision makers to take action.”

Dr. Damodaran Bachani, Country Project Manager, John Snow India discussed the various measures that can be taken to ensure the health and safety of children. He said, “Developing health promoting schools, child friendly clinics for healthcare, promoting a healthy diet and regular physical activity are some of the ways to improve the health of children.”

Mr. Siddharth Agarwal, Director, Urban Health Resource Centre outlined the impact of climate change on slum children and their families, and discussed various approaches to mitigate climate change.
KEY HIGHLIGHTS:
- Investments needed to build better ecosystems in cities so that they work predictably
- Focus beyond health disasters with better disease prevention
- Natural resources form the critical infrastructure in cities and needs to be protected

SESSION 3: HUMAN RESOURCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The last session for the day was centred on “Human Resource and Capacity Building”, chaired by Dr. Ajay Sood, Director, Indian Institute of Public Health.

Dr. Amit Bhanot, Head, Health Nutrition and WASH, IPE Global, addressed the challenges for human resources in urban health. He said that one of the major challenges in providing quality affordable healthcare is the limited availability of quality workforce with a staggering 56.4% of all health workers in India being unqualified. He suggested a number of ways to motivate, train and retain the healthcare workforce.

Ms. Kaniz Muneez, Technical Specialist, PAHAL Project at IPE Global spoke on the need for creating enterprises within communities. She further explained the PAHAL, USAID and IPE Global’s flagship program that aims providing catalytic support to growth stage scalable social enterprises in developing affordable & quality healthcare solutions for the urban poor. She elaborated on project PAHAL’s work on capacity building of urban community health workers to drive demand for healthcare and create a sustainable revenue generation model for the workers.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:
- Need for strengthening specialized on ground workers, and ensuring economic and technical empowerment.
- Focus on aligning CSR and donor funds for capacity building of workers

POSTERS ON URBAN HEALTH

The event also showcased various posters around the theme of Urban Health, designed by the students of IIHMR. Some of the posters are as follows:
SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE EVENT

About PAHAL: PAHAL (Partnerships for Affordable Healthcare Access and Longevity), a joint initiative of USAID and IPE Global, aims to provide catalytic support to growth stage scalable social enterprises in developing affordable & quality healthcare solutions for the urban poor. PAHAL is a collaborative platform which seeks to connect, capacitate and catalyze innovative social enterprises focused on improving health outcomes.

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