

Healthcare and medical facilities should be accessible and affordable for all

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The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu said that the disruption caused by the pandemic must be seen as an opportunity to radically reform our health sector by effectively harnessing the power of digital technology and Artificial Intelligence powered tools.

He was addressing the 38th Annual Convocation of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) through video conferencing yesterday

Calling for the digitization of the health records and creation of a national platform to facilitate collection of comprehensive healthcare data across the country, Shri Naidu said that this will ensure that all the stakeholders in the health sector are digitally connected. He added that the analysis of data thus collected can produce valuable information, which can be used to improve the effectiveness of our health system.

The Vice President opined that as the world's second-most-populous country with a track record of rapid economic growth, India faces both unique challenges and unprecedented opportunities in the sphere of public health.

Speaking of the several milestones the nation has achieved in healthcare since independence, Shri Naidu said that India has dynamic pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, world-class scientists, including a burgeoning clinical trials industry and leading hospitals that attract foreign patients.

He added that India is now the pharmacy to the world and expressed hope that it would soon be the most preferred healthcare and health tourism destination to the world.

The Vice President said that Indian healthcare scenario was a spectrum of contrasting landscapes, at one

end of which are state of the art, urban hospitals and research centres that are undertaking cutting edge research, driving healthcare industry forward and on the other end are rural healthcare institutions that need substantial improvement.

Asserting the need to deliver quality healthcare to all irrespective of where one is living, Shri Naidu said that healthcare and medical facilities should be accessible and affordable for all.

He cautioned that these challenges are not simple enough to be tackled by the government alone and called for concerted and coordinated efforts from both the private and public sectors. He asked private sector players, especially organizations like the AAPI to strengthen the hands of the government in its quest to deliver quality healthcare to the last citizen.

Observing that countries with strong primary healthcare systems have better health outcomes, the Vice President emphasized the need to strengthen India's primary healthcare system. "The private sector must collaborate with various state governments in establishing state-of-the-art primary healthcare facilities in each district", he said.

Stating that India is extremely proud of its doctors and healthcare professionals who are rendering invaluable services in countries across the globe, he urged these doctors and healthcare practitioners to devote some of their time and energy in helping to augment India's healthcare set up. He asked them to focus on medical education, mentoring, collaborative research and to work with medical professionals in India to upgrade healthcare facilities in the country.

He also wanted them to facilitate knowledge building and the transfer of cutting-edge technology and skills to India so that we may truly become 'Athmanirbhar' in this field.

Expressing concern over the rising incidence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) or life style diseases, especially among the youth in India, Shri Naidu urged organizations like AAPI to collaborate with the government and private sector in India in their crusade against NCDs.

He called for collective efforts to promote awareness among the people, particularly school and college students, on the negative impact of sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy dietary habits.

The Vice President also highlighted the need to invest in providing timely and high-quality emergency health services in the country and the need to train every citizen in emergency first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

Shri Naidu asked NRI medical professionals to share the best practices followed by the nations of their residence in areas such as sanitation, cleanliness and nutrition and urged them to promote Yoga in those countries, not only to strengthen India's soft power but also to promote health and wellness world-wide.

He also urged organizations like AAPI to assist Indian government in accelerating the pace of technology adoption so as to take the benefits of affordable and quality healthcare to all.

Dr. Suresh Reddy, President, AAPI, Dr. Sudhakar Jonnalagadda, President elect, AAPI, Dr Seema Arora & Dr Sajani Shah, Members of AAPI, doctors and medical professionals attended the online event.

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