

(IPR) A media workshop themed 'Building Effective Communication Engagement Pathways for Public Health in the North-East' was organised in the Capital today. Organised by the Public Health Foundation of India in consonance with STNM Hospital, the Swasth Uttar Purv (Healthy North-East) media workshop was a prelude to the two-day North-East Healthcare Summit 2017 to be held in the state capital on 8th-9th September 2017.

The inaugural session of the workshop was graced by Lok Sabha MP Shri P.D. Rai as the chief guest, and had Dr.K. Bhandari, DG cum Secretary Health Government of Sikkim, Dr. Bamin Tada, Director, Regional Resource Centre, MOHFW for North-East States, and Dr. Subash Hira, Distinguished Professor of Public Health & Infectious Diseases, PHFI as the keynote speakers.

The workshop aimed to deliberate on the role of political will and media in shaping the health policy in India, with special reference to the North-eastern States. It aimed to bring key stakeholders – the media and public health experts under one platform to help understand the challenges in highlighting key public health issues and scenario in the North-East and share key research on various communicable and non-communicable diseases affecting the region.

Addressing the session, MP Shri P.D. Rai maintained that health is the least debated topic in Parliament as well as in media discourses. He, however, stated that this trend needed to change through active collaborations, convergence of public health programs and the need to work towards a concrete Policy on Public Health. He added that the media should focus on telling stories of human interest to highlight the good practices of the Health fraternity in each of the North-eastern States. He extended a warm welcome to the delegates and thanked PHFI for choosing Sikkim as the venue for the 2nd North-East HealthCare Summit slated to commence on Friday.

DG cum Secretary Health Dr. K. Bhandari in his keynote address stated that Sikkim is one of the better performing states in the country in terms of key health indicators. He attributed the success to the prevailing peace, good governance and political will to address health care services in the State. He also briefed about the health care system in the State and the good practices of the State. He also informed about the steps being taken by the Government to address pressing challenges in health care services.

Dr. Subhash Hira in his key note address highlighted the healthcare scenario in each of the North-Eastern States in terms of key health indicators.

Dr. Bamin Tada elucidated the critical issues, challenges and opportunities in healthcare in the North-east.

Likewise, Dr. Priscilla C Ngaihte, In Charge, North East Region (Special Projects), PHFI, presented an overview of Public Health in India, with special reference to North-Eastern States.

A short film on Swasth Uttar Purv was also screened on the occasion.

Earlier, Shri Rajiv Chhibber, Head- Media Relations, PHFI, in his welcome address gave a brief introduction about the workshop.

The inaugural session was followed by a panel discussion comprising of distinguished media panel namely Shri Karma Paljor, Consulting Editor, CNN News 18, Shri Subhojit Sengupta, Associate Editor, Network 18, and Shri Amit Patro, Editor, Sikkim Express. The session was chaired by Dr. Bamin Tada and mediated by Ms. Gina Sharma, PHFI. The session deliberated on topics concerning reporting of health issues, ways to improve the quality and frequency of media reporting on Public Health, and the need for reporting beyond Hospitals to highlight public health. Media representatives from the North Eastern States also participated in the discussions.

The 2nd North East Healthcare Summit 2017 is being organized by the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) in partnership with the Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER), the Government of Sikkim and the STNM Hospital. 8th and 9th September also marks the Centenary Celebrations of STNM Hospital.

The objective of this year's summit is to strengthen its focus on key health issues in the North-East region, explore emergent avenues for collaboration and provide a platform for interaction between various agencies and stakeholders such as healthcare provider, policy maker, researchers, government officials, private sector and non-governmental organizations.

