

Health-related data at click of button

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Taking lead over other states the Himachal government has decided to put an integrated health information system in place to make available on a click of a button the complete health-related data pertaining to the 12.5 lakh families of the state, besides details of various government health programmes and interventions, vital indicators and other statistics.

The web-based health information is being developed using the e-kutumb software designed for maintaining family data pertaining to anganwadis. It is being modified and upgraded to

include complete family data based on panchayat records to ensure that no household was left out. The disease profile, immunisation status and other data details regarding each family will be included in the comprehensive data base to support decision making, health care delivery and management of health services right down to the grassroots level.

The birth and death register will also be integrated into the system to ensure that data pertaining to families is automatically updated. Disease surveillance will also be an integral part of the system and it will also enable the health department to closely monitor the impact of the various

health programmes being implemented in the state.

"At present the health-related data base is very fragmented and there is no integrated system. A number of stand alone information systems, mostly catering to the needs of national programmes are in operation. Moreover, the essential information required for effective planning, monitoring and evaluation is largely unavailable. Hence the need for an integrated system, explains principal secretary, health, Deepak Sanan.

Once the basic data is incorporated into the system, the health authorities will be able to keep track of patients of tuberculosis and AIDS which required

regular treatment. The doctors will be provided training for reporting information regarding morbidity and mortality so that the system reflects the changing disease profile in real time. The flow of useful information from the grassroots level will enable the government to effect required midcourse changes in policies and interventions to ensure that the programmes yield the desired results, he adds.

The government also plans to introduce toll free call centres for availing ambulance services covering the entire state. The system will be based on global positioning system to ensure that the services were made available in shortest possible time.