

GUJARAT

AVAILABILITY OF HOSPITAL BEDS-

At least one hospital was designated in every District for the treatment of COVID patients. A team of senior officials was tasked with ensuring bed availability in these COVID Civil Hospitals. A two-part pricing arrangement was adopted in Ahmedabad in collaboration with private hospitals for augmenting health infrastructure availability. Half the beds were blocked by the Government to provide treatment to patients referred by them and the cost of treating them was borne by the Government at previously negotiated rates. The remaining beds were available to patients on a payment basis, chargeable up to a ceiling rate specified by the Government. Daily patient feedback was solicited to ensure quality of health service delivery. The availability of private quota beds was shared publicly. Private hospital employees were designated as COVID employees under the Epidemic Act, so they could not leave their job and their service conditions could not be changed adversely during this period.

GENERATING AWARENESS -

A public campaign called 'Hu pan Corona Warrior,' ('I am also a Corona Warrior') was launched for engaging religious leaders, RWAs and citizens in the fight against COVID. People were reminded about the importance of physical distancing and masks and encouraged to use the Arogya Setu app. Live music was used by the Ahmedabad police to create awareness about preventive measures for COVID.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION -

Food grains were distributed to migrant labourers without ration cards under the Anna Brahma Yojana, while cardholders and labourers were provided Direct Benefit Transfers under the Mukhya Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. The Chief Minister made an appeal to APL beneficiaries to not avail their portion of free food grains if they could afford to pay for them. Around 30 % of APL beneficiaries responded favourably to the appeal and their share was distributed free of cost to BPL cardholders. The entire distribution chain was computerized, enabling administrators to monitor stock availability and distribution to beneficiaries at all Fair Price Shops (FPS).

DHANWANTARI RATH -

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) developed the "Dhanwantari Rath", a mobile van providing non-COVID essential health services to the doorsteps of people. Since many large hospitals were mainly dedicated for

COVID treatment, these measures ensure delivery of non-COVID essentials to people who cannot visit hospitals at this time. These mobile vans are staffed with an AYUSH doctor, paramedic and nursing staff along with the local Medical Officer from the Urban Health Centre (UHC) of the AMC. They are equipped with essential medicines, vitamin supplements, basic testing equipment and pulse oximeters, malaria and dengue tests. The vans have treated individuals for fever and respiratory infections as well as referred patients with hypertension, diabetes and other comorbidities for clinical treatment at nearby UHCs, CHCs and hospitals. ASHA workers were given the responsibility of ensuring safe deliveries and creating awareness about the need for keeping mosquito breeding in check and taking precautions against dengue and malaria during the rainy season.

EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT PROVISIONS -

A dedicated control room was established for ensuring provision of essentials to citizens during lockdown and responding to grievances in a swift manner. Citizens could register their complaints through specified emergency numbers. A Core Crisis Management Committee was also constituted. The State Government established partnerships with leading pulmonologists, critical care specialists and intensivists who visited hospitals regularly, examined patients and provided guidance on treatment possibilities. Tele-mentoring was initiated by a group of experts based in Ahmedabad who interact with ICUs dealing with COVID patients and share best practices. A state-level Task Force was constituted with doctors, primarily from the private sector.