



Credit: WHO Pakistan/A. Zaidi 22 March 2018 – At the health stocktake meeting that took place today in Lahore, Dr Jamshaid Ahmed, Head of the WHO Provincial Office in Punjab, expressed his appreciation for the remarkable progress made towards implementation of the Punjab Health Reforms Roadmap. “The journey of the Health Reforms Roadmap under the leadership of Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab, has revolutionized the health sector in Punjab,” he said.

Since the Punjab Health Reforms Roadmap was launched in April 2014, routine immunization coverage in Punjab has improved by almost 22%, from 62.3% in 2014 to 84% in 2017. Punjab was also the first province in Pakistan to introduce the vaccine against rotavirus into its routine immunization schedule in 2017, and is the only province in Pakistan which has successfully eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus.

Punjab has also increased skilled birth attendance tremendously from 64.7% in 2014 to 84% in 2017; the fastest increase registered globally, as reflected in the Punjab Health Survey. As a result, over 325 000 additional children are born each year with medical care in the first moments of their life.

As part of a broader hospital reform, the number of ambulances has been increased to 433 in March 2018. The ambulance service transports 20 000 patients every month from home to childbirth facilities as part of routine transfers. Moreover, the number of doctors employed in hospitals in Punjab has doubled over the past three years.

The hepatitis programme was also discussed at the meeting given that Pakistan has the second highest global prevalence of hepatitis C. The Government of Punjab has set a target to eliminate hepatitis C from the province by 2030 and is taking both preventive and curative measures. “Over 300 000 patients are currently registered in hepatitis clinics, over 50 000 have been counselled through the hepatitis health line and over 60 000 are undergoing treatment. This means the department is well on track to reaching its goal of treating 100 000 patients by June 2018,” said Dr Jamshaid Ahmed.

WHO Pakistan will continue to support Punjab in the implementation of the Roadmap.

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