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### Health & Insurance

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## DMAI wants Ministry of HRD to implement strategies focusing on child health

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With a view to ensure better healthcare facilities to the children's in the country, the disease management association of India (DMAI) recently sent a high level representation to Dr M M Pallam Raju, Union minister for Human Resource Development (HRD) suggesting to implement strategies that will focus on child health through ministry of HRD.

In the letter to the minister in the second week of this month, the Association stressed that considering the current requirements of the country where healthcare needs of the children's are blatantly ignored, it is high time to focus on steps aimed at covering this lacunae. To achieve this goal it is essential to explore a strong collaborative working relation between the ministry of HRD, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the Ministry of Women & Child Development and the Ministry of IT & Communications.

Rajendra Pratap Gupta, president and board member, DMAI suggested that one of the best ways to achieve this is to include child health and other requisite knowledge relating to child health as a part of the health education in school and college curriculum. "We strongly believe that such an initiative will help us in addressing the problem of lack of proper child healthcare in the country in an effective manner, as it will help in promoting and sensitising the people about the importance of child health from the start. We have been following this issue very closely, and have sent numerous proposals besides meeting up with various officials from time to time. We sincerely hope that the government will consider this with utmost urgency," he said.

Among some of the other suggestions sent, DMAI wants the HRD to start a chapter on hygiene and oral care from class one onwards along with creating animated pictures and videos for children's health that could be multilingual, and can be screened nationally in classes or using mobile health as a medium to disseminate the audio visuals. They also want the ministry to have a chapter and subject called 'essentials of health', which should be exam based for better acceptance and impact of the subjects on the students. DMAI also want the ministry of Health & Family Welfare to define child health and check-up guidelines on the lines of vaccination charts till the age of 15 years apart from it being incorporated in the school curriculum.

Gupta suggested that since child obesity is a serious issue, it should can be addressed by imparting the right knowledge about calorie exchanges through active involvement of the parents as they have a greater influence on the children's lives. He also suggested that for better development of the students, work outs through yoga or mediation must be introduced in all schools, along with mandatory listing of ideal height, weight, age charts in all classes, which in every six months must be reported in the half yearly and annual report card.

Gupta pointed out, "Children do not realise the importance of having adequate quantity of water, and as they are restricted to go to toilets, it is high time that the guidelines are issued to all schools for adequate water consumption and availability of drinking water and toilets in school. These issues may sound to be trivial but in reality they have a long term impact on the health of the children. We hope that these issues are given the highest priority at the highest level, to ensure that next generation is a healthy one."

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