

**WELCOME ADDRESS AT  
THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON FIRE AND  
LIFE SAFETY IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES  
AIIMS DATED JANUARY 16, 2017**

**V. SRINIVAS, IAS  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR ADMINISTRATION AIIMS**

Respected Shri J.P.Nadda ji, Health and Family Welfare Minister and President  
AIIMS,  
Minister of State Shri Faggan Singh Kulaste,  
Minister of State, Smt. Anupriya Patel  
Director AIIMS Prof M.C.Misra,  
Additional Secretary MOHFW and MD NHM Shri Arun Panda,  
Secretary NDMA,  
Distinguished Delegates,

I take this opportunity to welcome Shri J.P.Nadda ji, Health and Family Welfare Minister of India and President AIIMS to the National Workshop on Fire & Life Safety in Health Care Facilities. I would also like to welcome the Ministers of State Shri Faggan Singh Kulaste ji and Smt. Anupriya Patel ji to this workshop. I would also welcome the Director AIIMS, Additional Secretary MOHFW and Secretary NDMA as also my colleagues in the Ministry Shri Sudheer Kumar, Shri Manoj Jhalani and Shri Sunil Sharma to the Workshop.

Over the past two years, Shri J.P.Nadda ji has launched a number of programs of national importance from the Dr. Ramalingaswamy Board Room. The Kaya Kalp Scheme (The Clean Hospital Campaign), the first AMRIT Pharmacy in India, the Online Registration Scheme, the OPD Transformation Scheme, the major civil works construction projects of AIIMS were all launched from this august Board Room. Each of these programs has had huge impact for the creation of Patient Friendly Hospitals with the e-Hospital Program benefitting over 42 lac patients in AIIMS with the Prime Minister announcing pan-India replication of the project from the ramparts of Red Fort on 2016 Independence Day. Today it is under his directions that we have convened on a subject of critical importance for hospital safety – to discuss the issues of Fire and Life Safety in Health Care Facilities.

This workshop marks the culmination of a 2 week campaign in AIIMS on Fire Preparedness. Its difficult to adopt the 2016 fire safety guidelines of NDMA in old buildings often not in conformity to the structural criteria needed for fire safety.

In my tenure in AIIMS, I have witnessed 5 small fires in 2015 and 2 small fires in 2016. No lives were lost. But it was clear that Fires can be devastating, especially in India's largest public hospital where a large number of people who need to be evacuated are vulnerable. There are special requirements that must be met with while evacuating such people in case of fire emergencies. But before that – **“fires must be prevented”**.

The hospital fires that I witnessed were in the administrative block, in the pathology department, in the neurosurgery operation theater, in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor ward and in a laboratory of the Department of Rheumatology in PC Teaching block. The location of these fires was in the switch boards/ UPS machines/ ventilators and inflammables containing alcohol-based liquids that laboratories were carrying. Standards and compliance became essential to address the weaknesses in AIIMS fire safety systems. While no loss of life was suffered but the damage to AIIMS property was quite large.

In response, AIIMS started reviewing our fire preparedness on a fortnightly basis. The basic principles were to evacuate all fire exits, ensure that all our fire extinguishers were on auto mode and adequate signages were displayed. To address the electrical fires at the Institute and Centers, thermal scanning and thermal imaging audits have been conducted. Cables where temperatures increase are immediately detected in the process. All panels having loose wires have been checked. Fire safety circulars have been issued to all faculty and laboratory in-charges.

The Delhi Fire Services was requested to examine and renew the Fire Safety Certificates to the 5 Centers of AIIMS and the Main Hospital Building. As of December 2016 all the 5 Centers of AIIMS namely the Dr R.P.Center, the Center for Dental Education, the CN Center, the Cancer Hospital, the Trauma Center and the Main Hospital have all received fire safety certificates.

AIIMS procured adequate number of fire fighting equipment like gas masks, high voltage torches and fire extinguishers. We deployed a large team of fire supervisors and a fire consultant equipped with wireless communication. Signages were installed indicating the fire exits, nearly 5000 AIIMS faculty and nurses trained in evacuation exercises on a monthly basis. The water hydrants are checked on a regular basis to ensure that they have water with adequate pressure. Director AIIMS has chaired meetings with the Heads of Departments for fire preparedness in ICU's.

The new constructions of AIIMS are entirely in conformity with the 2016 NDMA guidelines. The National Cancer Institute, the new buildings in Masjid Moth campus are being constructed in compliance with the provisions of the Delhi Fire Services Act.

Once again, let me welcome each of the delegates for this important National Workshop and wish the deliberations all success.

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