



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF CHEST PHYSICIANS (India)

A PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN
RESPIRATION, CIRCULATION AND ALLIED SCIENCES

Prof. S. N. Gaur
Hony. Secretary

Head Office at :

VALLABHBHAI PATEL CHEST INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI, DELHI - 110 007

E-mail : sngaur9@gmail.com

NCCP-I/PMO/NMC/UG Medical Curriculum/2024/01

Ref. No.

September 19, 2024
Dated

To,

Shri Narendra Modi Ji,
Prime Minister, Government of India
Prime Minister's Office,
152, South Block, Raisina Hill, New Delhi-110011

[SUB : Earnest Appeal to Reconsider and Include the Department of Respiratory Medicine in the list of Essential Departments at Medical Colleges for the Undergraduate (M.B.,B.S.) Medical Education Programme, in light of Ayushman Bharat, TB-mukt Bharat, the recent COVID-19 pandemic and future preparedness]

Dear Shri Narendra Modi Ji,

Namaskar !

Sir,

We, the undersigned, on behalf of the **National College of Chest Physicians India [NCCP(I)]**, the oldest and first registered association of Chest Physicians in India, established in 1959, with more than 1800 members and 300 fellows on our roll, would like to kindly draw your kind attention to the **unfortunate removal of the department of "Respiratory Medicine/ Pulmonary Medicine/Chest Medicine/Tuberculosis and Chest diseases"** from the list of essential departments in medical colleges for undergraduate medical (M.B.,B.S.) programme by the National Medical Commission (NMC), notified through the **Gazette of India dated August 16, 2023** via notification number **CG-DL-E- 17082023-248154**.

In this regard, we would like to apprise you of the far-reaching implications and futuristic impact of such a move, which we believe will adversely affect successful achievement of Your visionary goals and programmes of **Ayushman Bharat, TB-mukt Bharat, the recent pandemic of COVID-19 and preparedness for future pandemics**, and we seek your active intervention to reconsider and rescind this decision by **reinstating Respiratory Medicine in the list of essential departments in medical colleges for undergraduate course, as it was previously**. In this regard, we have already written two letters no. **NCCP-I/NMC/UG Respiratory Medicine/2023/01** dated **August 22, 2023** to the Hon'ble Health Minister and no. **NCCP-I/PMO/UG Medical Curriculum 2023-objection/01** dated **August 30, 2023** to Your august office and to the National Medical Commission.

To begin with, the Bhole committee report in 1946 acknowledged the need of specialized medical departments in medical colleges to address evolving needs of the public healthcare system. Likewise, the department of Respiratory Medicine, which initially began as a department of "Tuberculosis" in many medical colleges, was subsequently upgraded and renamed as "TB and Respiratory (Chest) Diseases" and "Respiratory (Pulmonary) Medicine" at different stages, in order to keep pace with the emerging importance, needs and challenges of diseases within the ambit of this specialty.

(contd.....2)



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF CHEST PHYSICIANS (India)

A PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN
RESPIRATION, CIRCULATION AND ALLIED SCIENCES

Prof. S. N. Gaur
Hony. Secretary

Head Office at :

VALLABHBHAI PATEL CHEST INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI, DELHI - 110 007

E-mail : sngaur9@gmail.com

NCCP-I/PMO/NMC/UG Medical Curriculum/2024/01

September 19, 2024

Ref. No.

Dated

: 2 :

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has acknowledged the rising global prevalence of Respiratory Diseases by 200% during the last decade; and by 2030 has prioritized it as the NUMBER ONE killer of mankind, over other systemic diseases. Nearly 40% of the patients in any general practitioner's clinic or in the out-patient departments of any hospital present with one or more respiratory symptoms. To breathe clean and unpolluted air is recognized as a basic human right, however, air quality in all the major cities of India are well above permissible limits, due to air pollution, industrial effluents, traffic congestion, and other factors. **This rapid surge of respiratory diseases will adversely affect the health, lives and economy of a very large proportion of India's citizens; and; subsequently, your vision of Ayushman Bharat, which seeks to make global standards of healthcare delivery available at the grassroot level.**

We believe that undergraduate training in the Respiratory Medicine department for the M.B.,B.S. course is essential to impart training in respiratory diseases to our doctors of the future (the "Indian medical graduates" as defined by the NMC regulations) to render them capable of **mitigating this impact by confidently treating a wide variety of patients of Respiratory illnesses with efficiency, skill and competence on par with a global standard of care, so that their efforts wholeheartedly contribute to achieving Your Farsighted Vision of Ayushman Bharat.**

Tuberculosis (TB) is an ancient infection that continues to be the scourge of mankind, and we in India are home to a population afflicted by one of the world's largest national TB burdens, including 26% of the global burden of drug-resistant TB. **As dedicated TB warriors, we humbly salute your visionary leadership in recognizing this as a national health priority to shift the focus from TB control to TB elimination, coupled with our target to achieve a "TB-free India (TB-mukt Bharat)" by 2025, five years ahead of the global target, which has been taken up by the WHO and National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) on a war footing.** Specialized care for drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) is available in medical colleges under the department of Respiratory medicine in collaboration with the NTEP with the shared objective to provide the best standard of care to a large number of afflicted patients, particularly those from the economically weaker sections of society. According to the NTEP reports, **more than one-fourth (25%) of all TB patients in India are successfully diagnosed and treated at medical colleges alone, by the department of Respiratory Medicine,** where, apart from providing primary, secondary and tertiary-level care for TB, the department also encourages and engages medical students to participate actively in social mobilization, awareness and advocacy for TB elimination, and sensitization of society by generating public awareness during the World TB Day and other patient outreach programmes. All M.B.,B.S. students are trained in TB diagnosis and management according to NTEP guidelines during their clinical posting in the department of Respiratory Medicine; thereby ensuring that our Indian medical graduates of the future will be able to directly manage TB and DR-TB patients comprehensively; **and work towards successfully achieving your goal and objective of "TB-mukt Bharat" (TB-free India) by 2025. Once the department of Respiratory Medicine loses its importance in the undergraduate (UG) medical education curriculum, the attainment of your noble vision of TB-mukt Bharat will suffer a very grave and irreversible setback.**

Another recent respiratory infection, a novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2; or COVID-19) responsible for causing the worst and most devastating global pandemic in this century; has drawn importance to the importance of including basic training in the specialty of Respiratory Medicine at undergraduate level for M.B.,B.S. students.

(contd.....3)



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF CHEST PHYSICIANS (India)

A PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN
RESPIRATION, CIRCULATION AND ALLIED SCIENCES

Prof. S. N. Gaur
Hony. Secretary

Head Office at :

VALLABHBHAI PATEL CHEST INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI, DELHI - 110 007

E-mail : sngaur9@gmail.com

NCCP-I/PMO/NMC/UG Medical Curriculum/2024/01

September 19, 2024

Ref. No.

Dated

: 3 :

You are very well aware that during the recent pandemic of COVID-19 in India, our Respiratory medicine specialists were the FRONT-LINE COVID WARRIORS, at the forefront of disease management, and advisories and Nodal Officers in all states, hospitals and medical colleges; management of sick and critically ill patients at COVID-19 centres, intensive care units and even in advocating social distancing and vaccination. **We were proud to have worked during this devastating pandemic under Your visionary leadership, to ensure the best standard of care to, and save the countless lives of afflicted citizens from all strata of society; and also encourage vaccine advocacy to ensure that the government achieved its target of ≥1 billion vaccinations through the world's largest vaccination drive.** The grassroot COVID-19 warriors who successfully carried out all these activities were in fact the post-graduate and under-graduate medical students, residents and interns, and nurses who worked in perfect synchrony and harmony with Respiratory Medicine and other specialty departments at medical colleges, district hospitals, and other healthcare institutions. **Your efforts at the helm of affairs towards successfully tackling the COVID-19 pandemic in India were appreciated globally by other world leaders and by the WHO; we remain personally grateful to You for acknowledging the immense contribution, efforts and personal sacrifices of our Respiratory Medicine specialists and all healthcare personnel. We attained victory over the pandemic over seemingly insurmountable challenges as You led us from the front and supported us along all the way. However, if our Respiratory Medicine department loses its importance in the UG medical curriculum, our national preparedness for future pandemics will be severely affected; and we can scarcely afford to be complacent in this regard, at this stage.**

Respiratory Medicine occupies prime importance in the fields of Internal medicine, Emergency medicine and Critical care, particularly in management of patients with respiratory failure on mechanical ventilation, and in medical emergencies such as trauma, accidents, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, cyclones, drowning, poisoning, environmental disasters and occupational hazards. The Bhopal Gas tragedy of 1984 serves as a tragic reminder of the continued importance of Respiratory Medicine, as several survivors have respiratory symptoms even today. Chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs) such as asthma, chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD), and others are on the rise as reported in the Indian ICMR study on epidemiology of asthma, respiratory symptoms and chronic bronchitis in adults (INSEARCH), with the national burden estimated at ≥ 17 million and ≥ 14 million for asthma and chronic bronchitis respectively; furthermore; as many as one out of every three residents of our national capital Delhi are affected with respiratory illnesses. **Conservative estimates of the healthcare costs amount to a whopping 480,000 crore INR for asthma and 100,000 crore INR for COPD.** In addition, the rising incidence of Occupational lung diseases (Pneumoconiosis), Lung cancer, Sleep disorders, Respiratory emergencies; and other respiratory disorders, which are managed primarily by the Respiratory Medicine department in medical colleges, should serve as a reminder for the continued importance of training in Respiratory medicine in the UG medical curriculum. **Several respiratory diseases are now included in the National Programmes for Non-communicable diseases (NCDs); wherein the basic training to acquire knowledge, expertise and skill for state-of-the-art management of these is imparted to all M.B.,B.S. students in rotation during their clinical posting by the department of Respiratory Medicine; once this department loses its importance in the UG medical education curriculum, the public health goals of most of our National Health Programmes will also suffer a serious setback.**

(contd.....4)



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF CHEST PHYSICIANS (India)

A PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN
RESPIRATION, CIRCULATION AND ALLIED SCIENCES

Prof. S. N. Gaur
Hony. Secretary

Head Office at :

VALLABHBHAI PATEL CHEST INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI, DELHI - 110 007

E-mail : sngaur9@gmail.com

NCCP-I/PMO/NMC/UG Medical Curriculum/2024/01

September 19, 2024

Ref. No.

Dated

: 4 :

The decision of the Undergraduate medical education board (UGMEB) of the NMC to remove Respiratory Medicine from the list of essential departments in the undergraduate medical education curriculum is therefore; a matter of grave concern for all of us, with the potential to **negatively impact your vision for India's public health goals, set back the targets and reverse the achievements of India's public health programmes, as well as affect the objectives of TB-mukt Bharat and Ayushman Bharat, two of the world's largest public health missions; which are Your Vision and Our Mission;** furthermore; this decision is fraught with far-reaching adverse consequences when viewed from the current as well as futuristic perspective, which we have tried to highlight and bring to your attention.

On behalf of the National College of Chest Physicians India and also on behalf of NAPCON 2024 Coimbatore, the 26th Joint National Conference of Pulmonary Diseases of the National College of Chest Physicians India and Indian Chest Society, the largest conference of Pulmonary Diseases in India, to be held at Coimbatore from November 21 - 24, 2024, We earnestly request the kind intervention of your good office to reconsider and rescind this decision by the NMC, and reinstate the department of Respiratory Medicine as one of the essential departments for the undergraduate medical curriculum. This corrective step will go a long way to ensure that all qualified Indian medical graduates possess the necessary skills and expertise for efficient diagnosis and management of several common respiratory illnesses in the near future, thereby successfully ameliorating the present and future healthcare burden and cost to our country.

We welcome an opportunity to come together and engage in a positive and constructive dialogue and explore the possibility of working together with the Ministry of Health, the National Medical Commission; and other departments and stakeholders concerned. We would be grateful if we are granted an audience to discuss further and find solutions acceptable to all, in the interest of ensuring quality-assured skill-based medical education, standardized patient-centric care and a global standard of public health delivery, for the betterment of our nation and the welfare of our citizens, which every Indian can be proud of.

Jai Hind !!!

Thanking You,
Yours Sincerely,



Dr. Mohankumar Thekkinkattil
President, NCCP(I) & Organizing Chairman, NAPCON 2024 Coimbatore

Dr. S. N. Gaur
Secretary, NCCP(I)

Dated : September 19, 2024

Copied by E-mail to :

- 1) Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India
- 2) Dr. B. N. Gangadhar, Chairman, National Medical Commission
- 3) Dr. Aruna V. Vanikar, President, UGMEB, National Medical Commission