Skewed doctor-patient ratio and quackery major issues in public healthcare today

*Rural areas have only 1.1 lakh doctors and many unqualified professionals masquerade as doctors*

**New Delhi, 29 August 2017:** As per recent statistics, India has only about 1 million allopathic doctors to treat its population of over 1.3 billion people. Of this, only 1.1 lakh doctors work in the public health sector and therefore, about 900 million people in the rural areas are dependent on this small number of doctors for their healthcare requirements. According to the IMA, in such a situation, patients must share beds and doctors face severe burnout due to the skewed doctor-patient ratio in these areas.

India lacks adequate number of hospitals, doctors, nurses, and public health workers. There is a wide gap in the quality of and access to healthcare. This is not just between states but also urban and rural areas. The issue is further compounded by quackery with unqualified people masquerading as doctors. In the absence of doctors, people have no choice but to visit such quacks for treatment.

Speaking about this, **Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement**, said, “The recent infant deaths in UP bring to light, two very pertinent issues in healthcare delivery today: one is the skewed doctor-patient ratio and the other is that of quackery in the profession. It is a sad fact that in rural areas, the sick are first taken to the ‘so-called’ faith healers offering treatment in the garb of doctors, before they are brought in to a hospital for actual treatment. These quacks are at times educated only up to Class 12 and lack any medical qualification whatsoever. What is disturbing further is that there are not enough trained doctors in the country. Many do not wish to opt for entering the public healthcare system and this results in even ward boys proclaiming themselves as doctors in rural areas.”

As per surveys, only 1 out of 5 doctors in the rural areas are qualified to practice medicine. The IMA has taken a strong stand against quackery. This was also one of the issues raised by the association in a movement called Dilli Chalo conducted in June this year.

Adding further, **Dr Aggarwal**, said, “There is a need to conduct an updated assessment of quackery at both the state and district levels. Instead of training Ayush practitioners and quacks in prescribing allopathic medicine, there is a need to strengthen the traditional systems of medicine in offering first line of treatment and care.”
IMA urges one and all to beware of quacks as they indulge in cuts and commissions, will never refer the patient in time, invariably give steroids in every case, and will over investigate the patient to appear genuine. On the other hand, people should have faith in registered and qualified doctors as they do not indulge in unethical practices, do not take or give commissions, work with the primary aim and dharma of healing and not financial gain, believe in Karma and not Kriya, and will always guide patients with the best of interest.

-Ends-

**About IMA**: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2,60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

**For further information please contact:**
Sanjeev Khanna - 9871079105
Md Adib Ahmad – 9873716235
mediaimahq@gmail.com
IMA Public & Media Advocacy Cell