Perfect Health Mela to raise awareness on the need for mental support groups to fight substance addiction in youth

The Mela will have inter-school competitions, youth festivals, and nukkadnataks to discuss the problem and possible solutions

New Delhi, 28 September 2017: The Indian youth have an increasing addiction problem, so indicate statistics. About 75% of the youth in Punjab are severely addicted to drugs, which amounts to 3 of 4 children. Other cities such as Mumbai and Hyderabad are also quickly becoming popular for drug usage, with the number of addicted youth continuing to grow. The capital city if Delhi is not far with the youth addicted to tobacco, smoking, and substance abuse alike. About 75% of Indian homes house at least one drug user, often a male. Teenagers as young as 13 or 14 regularly experiment with intoxicants today.

India today has about 500 rehab centres across cities, which will soon not be enough to tackle the increasing burden of addicted youth. Among the addictive substances are cannabis, alcohol, tobacco (in different forms), and more recently, fluid whiteners, which are used by teens to get a temporary high. This is one of the many issues that the Perfect Health Mela being organized by the HCFl this year will tackle and discuss.

Speaking about this, Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFl) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said, "More Indian youngsters are struggling with addiction than ever before. The main factors responsible for this include peer pressure, depression, and adolescent immaturity. All this leads to a sense of dejection and depression and they resort to alternative ways to combat stress. Drugs and other addictive substances tend to give a temporary high making them forget the present situation and mental state. The Perfect Health Mela this year will address this issue, among many others. It will also focus on how the need of the hour is mental health support groups for youth and other ways to tackle addiction among youth.”

Towards this end, the Mela will see events such as National inter-school competitions, Divya Jyoti Medical Masti Youth Festival, and Nukkad Natak, through which awareness will be generated on how this issue can be addressed.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “There is a need to empower the society and the community to deal with the problem of substance abuse. It should be recognized as a psycho-socio-medical problem. This can be done by: encouraging drug abstinence and alcohol moderation, at the family level first; recognizing the signs of trouble, counselling the youth, and offering early support; and finally, treatment, rehabilitation, and proper reintegration of recovering addicts into the mainstream. The Mela will focus on all of these.”
The PHM is a mass health awareness module attracting over 2 to 3 lakh visitors every year. In its 24th edition, the event is being organized in association the NDMC, MCD, and IMA. MTNL is the title sponsor of the event. The theme this year is ‘Digital Health’. The Mela will be held from 4th to 8th October 2017 at the Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi.

There are some basic tips one can follow at the personal level to discourage substance abuse and ensure good mental health among the youth.

- Promote healthy lifestyles through personal and cultural practices. Set examples by following a healthy lifestyle.
- Promote social interaction between the old and young. Create a conducive environment at home by organizing activities that involve both age groups.
- Develop positive alternatives and keep in mind the interests of the younger generation. Do not ignore any warning signs of trouble and be a friend to them first.
- Don’t shun those who are addicted. Understand that getting out of this habit takes time and effort. Encourage them at every step.

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About Heart Care Foundation of India
Initiated in 1986, the Heart Care Foundation of India is a leading National NGO working in the field of creating mass health awareness among people from all walks of life and providing solutions for India's everyday healthcare needs. The NGO uses consumer-based entertainment modules to impart health education and increase awareness amongst people. A leading example of this is the Perfect Health Mela; an annual event started in 1993 that is attended by over 2-3 lakh people each year. The Mela showcases activities across categories such as health education seminars and check-ups, entertainment programs, lifestyle exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and competitions. In addition to this, the NGO conducts programs and camps to train people on the technique of hands-only CPR through its CPR 10 mantra for revival after a sudden cardiac arrest. They currently hold three Limca Book of World Records for the maximum number of people trained in hands-only CPR in one go. Keeping Article 21 of the Indian Constitution in mind, which guarantees a person Right to Life, Heart Care Foundation of India has also recently initiated a project called the Sameer Malik Heart Care Foundation Fund to ensure that no one dies of a heart disease just because they cannot afford treatment.

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