

PRESS RELEASE

STATE LAUNCH OF SAANS –

(SOCIAL AWARENESS AND ACTIONS TO NEUTRALIZE PNEUMONIA SUCESSFULLY)

Date: 29th November 2021 at 10:00 am at Ganesh Das Hospital, Shillong

The State Launch of SAANS (SOCIAL AWARENESS AND ACTIONS TO NEUTRALIZE PNEUMONIA SUCESSFULLY) was held on 29th November 2021 at 10:00 am at Ganesh Das Hospital, Shillong. The objective of the SAANS Programme is the prevention of Child Death from Pneumonia and Diarrhoea. The target age group is 0 – 5 years of age. The programme started with a welcome address by Dr. R. F. Tariang Director of Health Services (MCH&FW) followed by the keynote address given by Dr. P. Manners JT DHS (MCH&FW) cum Nodal Officer Child Health.



In the keynote address Dr Manners highlighted that pneumonia is one of the leading causes of loss of life of children under 5 years of age. In the country more than 1 lakh children die from pneumonia. Meghalaya is also one of the states in the country where Pneumonia has taken the lives of around 800 children have succumbed due to pneumonia under 5 years of age under 1 month 15% of deaths are due to pneumonia and 1 month to 12 month 34% have died due to pneumonia 1 – 5 years 14% have died due to pneumonia. Pneumonia has caused a lot of loss of lives in children. As parents and care takers there is a need to identify pneumonia as deadly and a major concern.

Dr. H. Giri, Indian Academy of Paediatrics in her speech spoke about how one can identify and recognize the signs and symptoms of pneumonia. These signs and symptoms include – shortness of breath, coughing, fever, dehydration and chest congestion. Checking the respiratory rate which the health workers have been trained in can also determine whether a child is suffering from pneumonia. Diarrhoea causes dehydration in children and for those under 6 months of age, the most nutritious meal for them is the mother's milk. Early

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and exclusive breastfeeding ensures that the child receives well balanced diet for the first 6 months of its life. Mother's milk should be continued even after 6 months of age along with other food items until the child is about 2 years of age.

Dr Giri also interacted with one of the mothers present in the programme. The mother recognized the symptoms in her child who is 1 year and 10 months old from home and she promptly brought her child to the hospital for treatment.

Ramkumar S IAS, Mission Director, National Health Mission in his speech mentioned that in Meghalaya the Maternal Mortality Rate and Infant Mortality Rate are both on the higher side as compared with other states in the country. Ante Natal and Post Natal checkups are of immense importance. Interventions are needed between Health Department and Social Welfare and Education Department. In order to keep pneumonia in check, a collaborated monthly review meeting will be held. It is a major concern that mothers in the state are young. In the last three months, the infant deaths have significantly come down in the State. He informed that ASHAs and other field workers have been trained in recognizing the signs and symptoms of pneumonia. In spite of the mothers having multiple children, it has been seen that some mothers are still not able to recognize the signs and symptoms of pneumonia. With awareness activities to be held on this programme, it is hoped that this information and educations will help mothers and other caretakers recognize these symptoms of pneumonia and hopefully bring the children for prompt and early treatment to prevent loss of life.

The programme ended with Dr. M Bareh Jt. DHS and MD Ganesh Das giving the vote of thanks.

Health officials also visited the SNCU – Sick Newborn Care Unit in Ganesh Das Hospital and presented gifts of woolen caps and socks to the mothers of the newborns.

