

Regarding request for inclusion of Type-I diabetes care under AB-PMJAY

SHRI SRIBHARAT MATHUKUMILLI (VISAKHAPATNAM): Thank you, Chairman Sir. I have been meaning to bring this issue to the attention of the House for some time now. This is regarding the silent and growing health crisis of Type 1 diabetes, which is particularly affecting lakhs of children in India.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition that often begins in early childhood and is not related to lifestyle. These children cannot survive without daily insulin and continuous glucose monitoring every day for the rest of their lives.

Unfortunately, India has the highest number of children with Type 1 diabetes in the world, with over 23 lakh children under the age of 19 living with this condition. Almost 16,000-20,000 new cases are reported every year. In my own parliamentary constituency of Visakhapatnam, we have thousands of affected children and the annual cost of managing Type 1 diabetes is significant - about Rs. 50,000 a year, which seriously impacts many middle-class families. The Government is providing insulin in hospitals, but the challenge is that supplies are irregular, there is insufficient trained staff, and there is very little outpatient care for this condition.

Currently, the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) covers only inpatient care for Type 1 diabetes, but does not cover the daily outpatient care that is essential for managing this condition. Across many cities in my constituency, there are voluntary organisations - in my case, the Diabetic Child Society, through which around 200 children receive dietary support and other assistance.

However, civil society alone cannot manage this; the Government has to be an active partner. We need to train and educate parents and children on how to manage this disease very carefully. This is important because people with this condition can lead a very normal and healthy life if it is managed well. Since it is not being managed properly, we are seeing many children suffer from entirely preventable complications such as kidney damage, vision loss, disability, and in extreme cases, even death.

The State of Rajasthan has taken the lead by allocating funds to establish Type 1 diabetes clinics. In fact, our hon. Speaker himself inaugurated such a clinic in his constituency.

Therefore, I urge the Government to include outpatient Type 1 diabetes care under AB-PMJAY, especially for children, and to ensure uninterrupted insulin and glucose supplies across all Jan Aushadhi Kendras and Public Health Centres.

The Government may also consider launching a national programme for Type 1 diabetes care or incentivising States to establish dedicated clinics to manage this condition. A vial of insulin is often the difference between life and death. I do not want any child to be denied a healthy life because of its scarcity.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this important topic.