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## DMAI under Aman ki Asha urges government for collaboration between India & Pakistan for healthcare

May 26, 2012

***Arshia Khan***

The Disease Management Association of India (DMAI) in a representation to the Union Health Ministry has urged to take active steps in building cross border collaborations between India and Pakistan by collaborating in eHealth and sharing technological know-how in healthcare with Pakistan. DMAI stressed that this will not only help in promoting the goodwill and peace between the two nations, but also will ensure availability of quality healthcare to the people of both the countries. *Aman ki Asha* is an initiative taken by Shahruxh Hasan, JMD, Jung Group.

In a letter addressed to Ghulam Nabi Azad, Health Minister on May 21, DMAI said that the government should take a proactive step to initiate this project as the challenges faced by both the countries in healthcare are similar. Policy expert, Rajendra Pratap Gupta, President and Director, DMAI, pointed out that it is the right time to address the challenges in healthcare especially with respect to dealing with access to healthcare in remote areas, chronic diseases and lack of tertiary care facilities. He remarked, "Healthcare facilities are deplorable in Pakistan. Besides, the Government of India has not done much for Pakistan and this is evident when you see the amount of work China is doing in Pakistan. This could be the future worry for India. Healthcare is something that the government can work out right now, and rather than spending billions of dollars on borders with Pakistan, it is worth routing some of the defense budget on people rather than wasting on borders and killing people."

He stressed, "Healthcare is not just about treatment but it is also about mending relations. To ensure this, we want the government to take steps for setting up cross border collaboration between centres of excellence of both India and Pakistan for cross border referral, treatment, chronic disease management and Ayurveda etc."

DMAI also suggested that visa for medical emergencies should be issued through a special 'health desk' within 24 hours, at Indian embassies in Pakistan so that safety of life is ensured in time. Most importantly Gupta in his representation stressed that India should play an active role in helping the people of Pakistan by providing them help with telemedicine and mHealth, by helping Pakistan to build at least four tertiary care hospitals.

DMAI is working on possible technical collaborations in telemedicine between India and Pakistan and has requested the government to support and recognise such path breaking initiative aimed at providing quality healthcare to people.

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