

Govt clears 5000 more post-grad medical seats

Rs 1,350-Cr Plan For 148 State Govt Colleges

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New Delhi: India will now produce 5,000 more specialised doctors every year. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Thursday approved the health ministry's proposal to add more post-graduate seats in 148 state government medical colleges.

The Rs 1,350-crore scheme will see a cost sharing ratio of 75:25 between the Centre and states. Though still far short of the numbers needed, the decision is being viewed as a positive step for a country, which has a shortfall of 6 lakh doctors, 10 lakh nurses and 2 lakh dental surgeons. Ironically, Indian doctors who have migrated to the developed world form nearly 5% of the medical workforce in the respective countries. Thursday's decision will see more doctors specialising in clinical disciplines like anat-



omy, microbiology, physiology, pharmacology, biochemistry, forensic medicine and community medicine. The country will also have more gynaecologists, paediatricians and general surgeons.

But where will India find teachers to teach these extra students? Ministry officials said they have recently amended the PG regulations wherein the student-teacher ratio has been revised from 1:1 to 2:1 to enable medical colleges to increase seats in PG courses. "The ratio of number of students to post-

graduate teachers, like a professor in subjects of broad specialties, has been increased to 2:1 in all our 148 government medical colleges from the 2010-11 academic session. This will help create 4,000 additional seats in different PG courses. In super-specialty courses too, the ratio will become 2:1 for both professors and associate professors. This will increase availability by nearly 700 seats," he added.

The same rule will apply to private medical colleges from 2011-12, the official added. The teaching experience required for the post of professor/associate professor has also been reduced by a year. The Centre is also trying to cash in on the expertise of NRI doctors, who are willing to return to the country. The teaching experience gained by persons of Indian origin in recognized colleges of five nations — the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand — is permitted to be taken into account, enabling such professionals to return and take up teaching assignments.