Dear Friend,

We are entering the new year 2022 with renewed hope and zeal. COVID is still around in new forms, but with lesser intensity, and we have stopped getting intimidated by it. A lot is short, we have learned to live with it.

While the month of January ushered in a new year, February has become synonymous with our Union budget. There are some interesting implications of COVID-19 on our country’s budget for the health sector. Ever since the pandemic hit the country, the health budget has been on the rise. In the current fiscal year (2022-23), Rs 86,200 crore has been allocated against Rs 73,932 crore in 2021-22, which marks an increase of 16.5 percent. I hope this trend continues in the coming years. It is heartening to note government’s focus on Digital Health and Tele Mental Health in Budget 2022-23. Digital Health is one of our core competencies, and we will continue to support all government initiatives.

Wishing you all happy and healthy months ahead till we meet again with new edition of Ripples, the WISH newsletter!

Rajesh Ranjan Singh

OUR PROGRAM FOOTPRINTS

IMPACT STORIES

Vaccinating the Tribes of Kotra Block in Udaipur District, Rajasthan

Kotra is a large block in Udaipur district, Rajasthan, primarily inhabited by tribal population with limited economic and livelihood opportunities. Thus, the economy of Kotra depends heavily on migration. Geographically, the location is hilly and hard-to-reach, with scattered villages and households. Public transportation facilities and quality communication services are scarce in this block.

With such limitations, it was difficult for the government staff at the Community Health Centre (CHC) to cover all eligible population under the COVID-19 vaccination drive. Realizing these challenges, the WISH team supported the government health department to vaccinate the communities residing in hard-to-reach areas of the block.

Communities were informed of the vaccination drive through public announcements. Motivational messages addressed the problem of vaccination hesitancy. The team supported the elderly and specially-abled people to reach the vaccination camp. Vaccination coverage in the block rose drastically (both 1st and 2nd doses in December 2021 and January 2022). The villagers expressed their gratitude by thanking the medical team for reaching out to them at their doorsteps to vaccinate them.

Eighty-year-old Shobha Ram Pandey was working on his farm when he fell on the barbed wire around it. The sharp edge of the wire pierced through his hand. As the treatment cost suggested by the private doctor was beyond his means, Shobha Ram visited the Katar Sub-center (Shravasti District, Uttar Pradesh) where WISH had installed a telemedicine system. Ranjana Rai, the Community Health Officer (CHO), took pictures of the wound from different angles and shared these images with the doctor on the TV screen. The doctor examined the wound and prescribed the medicines. Shobha Ram did not have to pay a single penny for this consultation. He visited the sub-center regularly for wound dressing. Shobha Ram was astonished to see how a doctor treated him, and cured him remotely.

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