

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

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Meghalaya introduces Community Based Health Incentive Scheme for ASHA;
Fixed incentive increased from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000

The Meghalaya Health Department has decided to increase the fixed incentive of the ASHAs from the existing Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000, under a new scheme called the **Community Based Health Incentive Scheme for ASHA**. This decision was taken in a meeting chaired by the Meghalaya Health Minister Dr. Ampareen Lyngdoh, along with senior State Health officials on Wednesday, in a discussion held with the office functionaries of the Meghalaya ASHA Workers' Union at Conference Hall, Main Secretariat, Shillong.

The Health Minister informed that the State is annually spending about Rs. 17 crores on Fixed incentives @ Rs. 2000 per month on the honorarium given to the ASHAs in addition to around Rs.22 to 23 Crores annual spending from NHM as performance-based incentives. The fixed incentives for the ASHAs was initiated in April 2021 because about 70 % of villages in Meghalaya have a small population and therefore, in order to ensure equity and basic minimum financial support for all ASHAs, the state introduced the fixed incentive system (in place of existing performance linked schemes).

Meghalaya Health Minister stated that a new scheme will now come into effect which will be named as the **Community Based Health Incentive Scheme** for ASHA. Under this scheme the Fixed incentive of ASHAs will be increased from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000. Under this, the Village Health Councils (VHCs) headed by the headmen at the community level will be responsible for reviewing and evaluating the performance of ASHAs in fulfilling the specified health milestones. She also informed the Hon'ble Chief Minister of the State Shri. Conrad K. Sangma has agreed in principle that an additional amount of Rs 1000 can be considered and added to the existing Rs 2000 fixed incentive from the State government.

Under the new scheme, the revised incentives for ASHAs will be based on ASHAs contribution and their efforts along with VHCs and Health Teams of PHC/CHC/Sub-centers to improve community-level health indicators. These include: Making all out efforts to save the lives of

mothers and children, Screening and Referral of NCD Cases, Ensuring 100% Full Immunization Coverage of new-borns up to 1 year of age and Ensuring 100% ANC Coverage for Pregnant Mothers, among others.

It was also informed that a dedicated Committee will be put in place for streamlining the newly announced **Community Based Health Incentive Scheme** for ASHA. The committee will comprise one ASHA representative from each district, a representative from VHC from each district, NHM Officials, and State Officials. It will also look into all the grievances put forth by the ASHAs during the discussion in today's meeting.

Speaking during the discussion, Sampath Kumar, IAS, Principal Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya reiterated that the State has taken up the concerns and issues raised by ASHA workers with utmost sincerity and dedication. He added that the State has been working strategically to address the systemic issues and to address the challenges of the community-level health workers. The State played a pivotal role in implementing the "ASHA First" application for seamless payment of ASHA incentives and to avoid delays in payments.

He also emphasized that ASHAs are community volunteers identified by their respective village communities, and therefore the spirit of volunteerism has to be kept alive with an aim to save peoples' lives by assisting health teams of their respective health facilities. The primary objective of 'saving lives' should not be forgotten. He also informed that in order to ensure that the ASHAs are not overburdened, the Health Department had also recently issued an executive order emphasizing the role of Medical officers, Mid Level Health Care Providers and the ANMs in each of the health facilities for visiting villages more frequently to take healthcare services closer to the people.
