

## 8 States to implement 'Ayushman Bharat'

Eight States and four Union Territories have signed MoUs with the Union Health Ministry to implement the government's ambitious national health protection mission — Ayushman Bharat — which aims to provide a cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family annually to 10 crore vulnerable families, an official said on Saturday.

Four States — Delhi, Odisha, Punjab and West Bengal — were yet to give a positive response, the Health Ministry official said. Discussions with these States are on, he said.

The eight States which signed the MoUs to implement the Ayushman Bharat: National Health Protection Mission include Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand. The Union Territory of Chandigarh is among the four UTs. Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Tamil Nadu would sign the agreement soon, the official said.

### Launch on August 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to roll out the programme on August 15. Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda had said the initiative would eventually become the world's largest healthcare programme because of the size of India's population. The scheme will ensure cashless and paperless access to services, costing up to Rs. 5 lakh per year per family, and will be available at the point of service in public and private empanelled hospitals across India.

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