

Government of Pakistan
Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination

PRESS RELEASE

Health Minister assured full support to strengthening the blood transfusion system in the country

Islamabad: 10 October 2018- Federal Minister for National Health Services, Aamer Mahmood Kiani, was briefed on the implementation of the German government funded Safe Blood Transfusion Programme (SBTP) and the regulation of the blood transfusion sector by Prof. Hasan Abbas Zaheer, National Coordinator SBTP and Chairman, Islamabad Blood Transfusion Authority (IBTA).

The Minister underscored the significance of the preventive aspect in healthcare especially blood transfusion and committed full support of the new government for strengthening the blood transfusion system in the country. He especially appreciated the support provided by the German government through KFW Development Bank to create the new blood transfusion system in Pakistan and expressed the new government's desire to see continuation in this successful Pak-German collaboration.

Professor Hassan Zaheer informed the Minister after completing the implementation of the first phase of the project in which a nationwide infrastructure has been created consisting of construction and equipping of a network of 10 modern Regional Blood Centres, and renovating and refurbishing 60 existing hospital blood banks. This infrastructure is now functional and providing quality transfusion services to the people of the region. Currently, the Phase II of the project is in progress, with the continuing assistance from the German KFW Development Bank, in which the scope and coverage of the project is being expanded in addition to strengthening the gains of the first phase particularly the smooth operationalization of the newly developed infrastructure. It is estimated that after the completion of the Phase II of the project in 2019, about 35% coverage of the national service delivery will be through the new system.

Prof. Zaheer also briefed the Minister about the working of the Islamabad Blood Transfusion Authority (IBTA).As a result of the sustained and committed efforts of the IBTA leadership the blood regulation has been streamlined in the federal capital. Currently, 18public and private sector blood banks have been granted licenses, 5 are registered and five have been closed down due to poor standards. The Minister was briefed in detail about the revived IBTA which has developed a very successful model of regulation based on constructive non-punitive approach. As a result now all

the blood banks in Islamabad have all essential required equipment, trend of automation is increasing, all blood collected is processed into three blood components, there is 100% automated screening for Hepatitis B, C and HIV, automated cross-matching is performed in the larger blood banks and the documentation standards have improved considerably. In addition, there is improved sensitization of voluntary blood donation and blood safety and the trend of voluntary blood donation is increasing. The IBTA regularly organizes activities to strengthen the capacity building of the blood bank personnel and there is an excellent and close coordination between the regulator and the service providers. The IBTA is also coordinating with the provincial counterparts to strengthen the provincial blood regulatory authorities.

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