

Piramal Swasthya Supports Government of Assam's Sarathi 104 helpline; Attends to More Than 1 Lakh calls in a Month

- Proactively connected with **16,362** quarantined people of Assam and created awareness around preventive measures to be taken for Covid-19
- Rise in number of calls by approximately **250%** post lockdown announced by Assam government

Guwahati, April 4, 2020: Piramal Swasthya Management and Research Institute in partnership with National Health Mission (NHM) and Government of Assam is collectively working to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic in the state. The Sarathi 104 Health Helpline has been offering 24x7 medical advice on COVID-19 to callers every day. In order to deal with increased number of calls, the frontline staff team has been significantly expanded. Paramedics, counsellors and doctors, are relentlessly attending to calls related to health advice, counselling, information sharing and reporting of COVID 19.

Post the lockdown announced by the Government of Assam on March 22, 2020, the team has collectively reached out to **16,362** quarantined people of Assam through outbound calls and additionally attended **over 80,856 incoming calls** till April 3, 2020. Over 80% of these calls have been related to seeking guidance and advice on COVID-19.

Below are the details related to the calls:

- Incoming calls:** The beneficiaries reach out to Sarathi 104 Health Helpline to report symptoms and seek advice. They also report suspect cases who are breaking the quarantine. The team also proactively shares information on COVID-19, how it spreads, and preventive measures with the help of trained paramedics, doctors and counsellors. In the month of March, a total of 1,35,727 calls have been attended by the team. **On an average, the team has been attending to approximately 8000 calls in a day post the outbreak and lockdown. This number has been steadily increasing**
- Outbound calls:** The Health Helpline team, under the directions of the National Health Mission, Government of Assam, also proactively reaches out to an exhaustive list of individuals who have migrated to Assam and have been asked to quarantine themselves at home. The quarantined individuals are contacted to check on their well-being, symptoms developed if any and adherence to quarantine. **In the past 1 week, a total of 16,362 calls have been made to such individuals**
- Support in contact tracing:** In order to contain spread of the virus, Honorable Health Minister, Government of Assam, Shri. Himanta Biswa Sarma, made an appeal to the citizens on reporting any individual with a travel history to any place outside Assam via Sarathi 104. Since then the center has received calls from all across Assam. People are coming forward and voluntarily reporting the cases. This information is shared on real-time with the Government to provide necessary support to the individual. The 104 Helpline has also served as a nodal point for contact tracing to help curb the spread of infection
- The 104 Health Helpline has also made outbound calls to hundreds of people who have travelled outside of Assam recently to counsel them, support them and provide much needed medical advice. Doctors from telemedicine centre have made video calls to these individuals to check on their health and provide medical advice

As a support to the district administration, Piramal Swasthya's on-field team consisting of Government of Assam's Sanjeevani-Village Health Outreach Program, with 80 Mobile Medical Units manned by more than 350 paramedics and support staff are actively engaged in field screening. The team is involved in checking on the health and wellbeing of quarantined individuals across all districts of

Assam. In coordination with district health authorities, the team has screened 2730 individuals so far. Further, the Field Officers of Prevention of Parents to Child Transmission of HIV project has been doing home delivery of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and cotrimoxazole preventive therapy (CPT) medicines to number of positive pregnant women and their spouses in remote locations across Assam.

Paresh Parasnis, CEO, Piramal Foundation said, “We at Piramal Swasthya continue to work in partnership with Government, in the remotest part of the country, to address the COVID-19 pandemic. While the country is under a lockdown for safety, our team is working round-the-clock to ensure that there is enough awareness related to Covid-19 among the marginalized communities. In Assam, through Sarathi 104 Health Helpline, we have provided validated information as per the guidelines of WHO and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to 1,35,727 beneficiaries in the month of March 2020. This initiative has helped in bringing down the anxiety and fear in the society caused due to the corona virus.”

Additional Support from the Government of Assam:

Piramal Swasthya’s 104 team is working relentlessly to support the Government of Assam in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. To support them and ensure their wellbeing, Government of Assam has approved dedicated vehicles for pick and drop. These vehicles are sanitized after each trip. Special seating arrangements are made at the Centre for them to follow social distancing and preventive measures for sanitization of the work space are taken as per process. The State Government has also supported the team by providing hand sanitizers, masks, necessary training on COVID 19, counselling support, relaxing exercises to handle stress and snacks. The Nodal Officer, Government of Assam. Also organised 100 volunteers, given the increase in number of calls. These volunteers are mostly involved in making outbound calls to home quarantined individuals.

The 104 Health Helpline of Government of Assam was set up in partnership with Piramal Swasthya and NHM in 2010, to provide affordable and accessible healthcare to the most vulnerable sections of the community.

Apart from Assam, Piramal Swasthya has been supporting beneficiaries through 104 Health Helpline across 6 states (Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Karnataka and Bihar) in partnership with the state government.

About Piramal Swasthya

Piramal Swasthya, under the aegis of Piramal Foundation, is focused on bridging public healthcare gaps by supplementing and complementing Government of India’s vision to meet Universal Health Care for all. Piramal Swasthya is one of the largest not-for-profit organizations in India - in the primary public health care space with a focus on Maternal health, Child and Adolescent Health, Non-communicable diseases. Piramal Swasthya is operational in 21 states in India through 35 innovative public health care delivery programs and has served more than 11.2 Crore beneficiaries so far. Piramal Swasthya employs 2500+ employees (including over 250 medical doctors) who work with Seva-Bhav. Over the last twelve years, the focus has been on, building platforms for sustainable impact at scale, Innovations to scale as a journey, Influencing policies, governance, and accountability of the public health care system as a knowledge and implementation partner of the NITI Aayog. @PiramalS

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