

# NATIONAL APPEAL

To end stigma and discrimination against people affected by leprosy

## 2012

**LEPROSY IS COMPLETELY CURABLE**

**FREE TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE**

**THERE ARE NO MEDICAL GROUNDS FOR DISCRIMINATION**

As members of the medical fraternity, we have the first responsibility to set the record straight. We affirm and endorse the National Pledge.

There are many myths and misconceptions about leprosy which lead to stigma and discrimination. Leprosy is a mildly infectious disease. It does not spread by casual contact. It is curable with Multi Drug Therapy (MDT) that kills the bacteria and stops the disease from spreading to others. MDT is available in all the Government/ NGO health facilities free of charge. Early diagnosis, prompt and complete treatment prevent the onset of disability and deformity associated with leprosy. There are no medical grounds for isolating a person with the disease.

Yet people with leprosy continue to face social discrimination, even after they are cured. Many families are marginalized, sometimes with devastating results.

Drugs can cure leprosy, but only greater public awareness can end the stigma it attracts.

India has the largest number of leprosy affected persons in the world. There has been a great success in reducing the number of new patients, but we need a wider cooperation to create greater awareness among people for early diagnosis and treatment of all the new patients. Without social stigma, more people would come forward for treatment.

We affirm the right of people affected by leprosy to receive treatment for other ailments at any health facilities.

We call for an end to discrimination against people affected by leprosy and their families. We support their right to live in dignity as other members of the community with equal access to opportunities and enjoying all their human rights.

We pledge to fight the stigma against leprosy by conveying this message to reach every corner of the society.

World Health Organization

WHO Representative to India

Dr. Nata Menabde

Indian Council of Medical Research

Director General

Dr. Vishwa Mohan Katoch

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

Director General of Health Services

Dr. Jagdish Prasad

Director General Railway Health Services

DG RHS  
Dr. V. K. Ramteke

Armed Forces Medical Services

Air Marshal D. P. Joshi  
AVSM, PHS

Indian Medical Association

President  
Dr. G. K. Ramachandrapa

Medical Council of India

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Dr. K. K. Talwar

Indian Academy of Pediatrics

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Dr. Rohit C. Agrawal

National Academy of Medical Sciences

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Dr. K. K. Talwar

The Association of Surgeons of India

President

Dr. Rama Kant

Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists

President

Dr. C. R. Srinivas

All India Ophthalmological Society

President

Dr. N. S. D. Raju

Indian Association of Physiotherapists

President

Dr. Umasankar Mohanty

Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation

Director

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International Federation of Anti-leprosy Associations India (ILEP)

National Coordinator

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Voluntary Health Association of India

Chief Executive

Mr. A. Mukhopadhyay

The Catholic Health Association of India

Director General

Rev. Dr. Tomi Thomas

Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh

Hon. Secretary

Dr. P. R. Manglani

**HELP INDIA TO BECOME LEPROSY FREE**