



Gujarat: A success story of strengthening capacities in oxygen therapy

Medical oxygen is a critical component of the healthcare infrastructure in India as oxygen therapy is essential for many emergency and non-emergency cases. While the country has strengthened the oxygen infrastructure by installing different oxygen systems across public and private health facilities, developing capacities of medical and nursing personnel working at various healthcare facilities, such as District Hospitals and Sub-District Hospitals, is crucial for effective utilization of the installed oxygen systems. The USAID RISE project focused on strengthening capacities by training healthcare providers on oxygen management. It demonstrated the success of its hub-and-spoke approach for strengthening the oxygen management system in Gujarat.

In Gujarat, medical colleges across six zones (Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar, Rajkot, Surat, Vadodara, and Gandhinagar) were strengthened as hub training facilities. USAID RISE conducted a training of trainers (TOT) for 39 master trainers – 25 anesthesiologists and 14 senior nursing staff – working in critical care units, following which the master trainers trained medical care providers at the spoke facilities in the district and sub-district hospitals in their respective zones. The end recipients of the training on oxygen therapy were a mix of specialist anesthesiologists, general medical officers, and nursing staff working at the spoke facilities.

The TOT was held on March 5, 2022, at Sir Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Medical College and Civil Hospital, popularly known as B.J. Medical College, in Ahmedabad. PATH, under the USAID RISE project, developed the learning packages, which were vetted by leading experts on oxygen therapy in India. The trainers used the modules to skill up the trainees on various aspects of oxygen management, such as operating equipment and therapy devices, checking oxygen wastage, titrating oxygen during therapy, quality testing protocols, among others. The training was delivered through classroom sessions and practical demonstrations.



Mr. Prabhav Joshi, MD, Gujarat Medical Services Corporation (GMSCL) addressing the ToT



Hub to spoke training being conducted in SIR Sayajirao General Hospital (SSG) Hospital, Vadodara

The exemplary implementation of the hub-and-spoke model steered the success of the USAID RISE project. The Government of Gujarat played a critical role by taking ownership of the program and facilitating its implementation. Additional Chief Secretary Commissioner and Mission Director, Department of Health and Family Welfare, along with other state health officials actively participated in the discussions involving the agenda, planning, and execution of the trainings. They provided the venue required by the program where hub and spoke facilities were developed, as well as the budget required for training of spoke facilities. The timely government approvals enabled active coordination among state departments and effective collaboration of medical educational institutions and public health services. The ownership by the government enhanced the quality of training

programs and ensured seamless transfer of knowledge and skills from the hub facilities to the spoke facilities. By end-March 2022, the entire state of Gujarat was equipped with 169 healthcare personnel (91 doctors, 77 nurses, and one technician) trained in oxygen management for delivering oxygen therapy to patients. All the trainings were completed without any gaps or delays in implementation.

The leadership of the state government in prioritizing capacity-building and its active ownership of the program resulted in the success of USAID RISE's hub-and-spoke approach to enhance the oxygen management capacities in Gujarat.