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Lancet Citizens' Commission for Universal Health Coverage

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Why in News

Recently, the **Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System** has been launched **online** which is a step towards achieving **Universal Health Coverage** (UHC) in India.

Key Points

- **Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System:**
 - **Participants:** It is a **first-of-its-kind participatory, countrywide initiative**, in collaboration with world's leading health journal **The Lancet and the Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute**, Harvard University.
 - **Objective:** To enable **participatory public engagement** to develop a citizens' blueprint for the implementation of UHC.
 - **Mission:**
 - To **lay out the path to achieving UHC** in India in the coming decade, working with all stakeholders.
 - To formulate a **roadmap for realising a resilient health system** that offers comprehensive, accountable, accessible, inclusive, and affordable quality health care to all citizens in India.
 - To **gather insights from across India** through grassroots surveys, public consultations and online discussions.
 - To **build partnerships and work closely with academic institutions, civil society and other stakeholders** to catalyse dialogue and knowledge sharing across fields.
 - **Focus :** Will be on the **architecture** of India's health system.
 - **Principles:** The Commission will be guided by **four principles** which are:
 - UHC covers all health concerns.
 - Prevention and long-term care are key.
 - The concern is financial protection for all health costs.
 - Aspiring for a health system that can be accessed by all who enjoy the same quality.

- **Universal Health Coverage:**
 - **UHC** means that **all individuals and communities receive the health services** they need without suffering financial hardship. It **includes the full range of essential, quality health services from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care.**
 - **Goal of UHC:** As stated in the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3)** is one of the most significant commitments to **equitable quality healthcare for all.**
 - **Benefits of UHC:**
 - **Enables everyone to access** the services that address the most significant causes of disease and death, and ensures that the quality of those services is good enough to improve the health of the people who receive them.
 - **Protects people** from the financial consequences of paying for health services out of their own pockets and reduces the risk of people getting pushed into poverty because unexpected illness requires them to use up their life savings, sell assets, or borrow – destroying their futures and often those of their children.
- **Other Related Initiatives:**
 - **Ayushman Bharat :**
 - It is a flagship initiative that attempts to move away from the sectoral and segmented approach of service delivery to a **comprehensive need-based health care service.**
 - It has been launched by the government with an **aim to move towards a provision of universal healthcare in the country.**
 - **POSHAN Abhiyaan:** It aims to ensure service delivery and interventions by use of technology, behavioural change through convergence and lays-down specific targets to be achieved across different monitoring parameters.

Way Forward

- Government funded programmes should **ensure that financial barriers should not stop access to needed advanced care.** As UHC evolves, **the poor and near-poor must get full cost coverage** while others may seek protection through employer funded schemes or privately purchased insurance.
- The challenge of building capacity of people in a short time needs to be addressed through more **transformational public-private partnerships (PPPs),** presenting another opportunity to develop and adopt e-learning models.

- For a sustainable UHC model, maintaining a balanced trade-off between **cost, quality and access** to healthcare services is critical. **A collaborative approach aligning patients, payers and providers**, along with **innovative partnerships**, will hasten efforts to mitigate risks, drive impact, forge stronger social returns and achieve sustainable UHC targets.

Source:TH