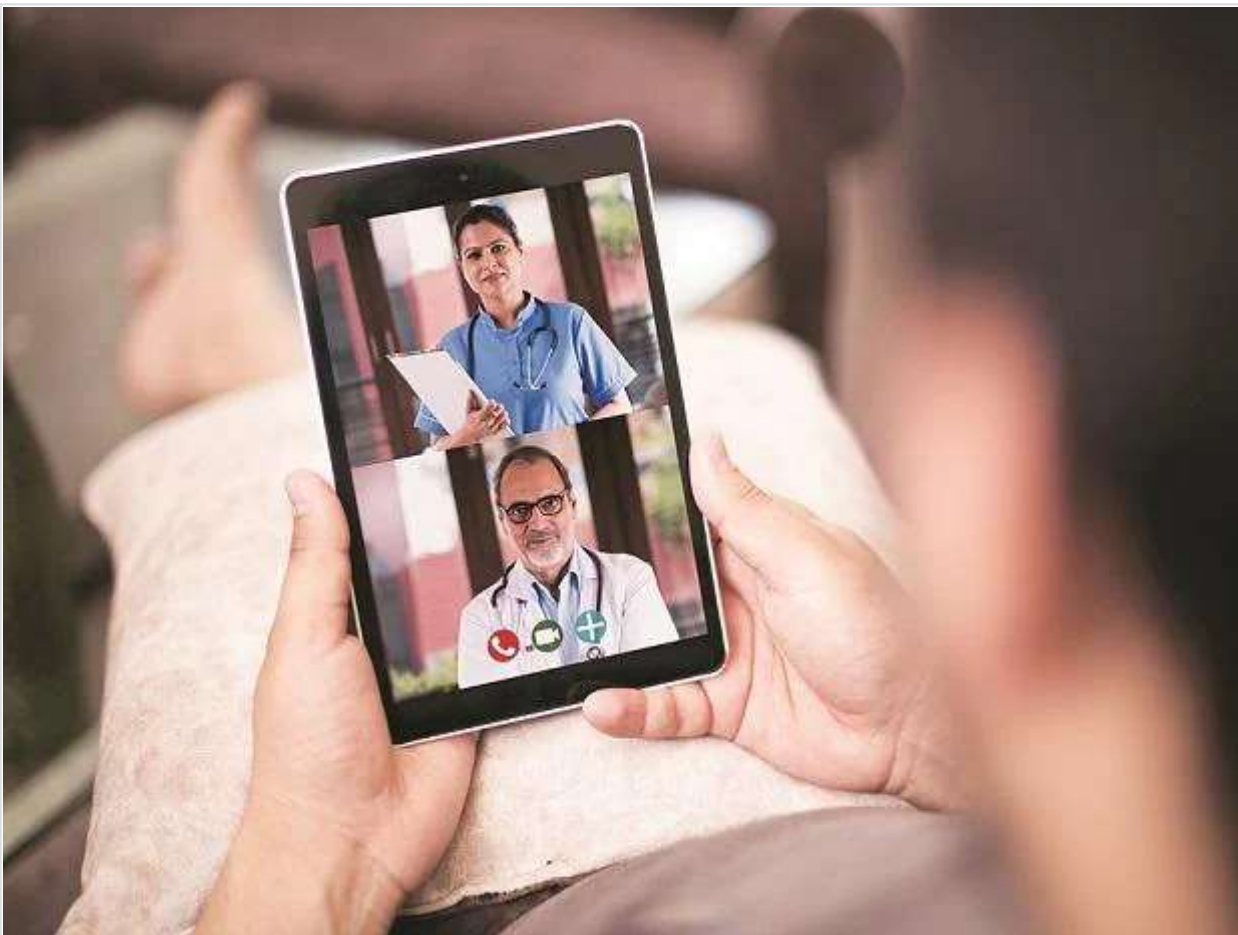


## Budget: Health allocation evokes mixed reaction from industry experts

Some experts have welcomed the provision for National Digital Health Ecosystem in the post vaccination first budget while some have opined that other essential services have been ignored

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The Healthcare industry experts have expressed mixed reactions to the Union Budget 2022.

Some experts have welcomed the provision for National Digital Health Ecosystem in the post vaccination first budget while some have opined that other essential services have been ignored.

K. Sujatha Rao, former secretary, Health Ministry, termed the budget "disappointing" for health and education. She tweeted, "A disappointing budget 4 health & education. Need to remember that roads and ports don't make sense if people are illiterate and sick! And such disdain for these human capability sectors after the trauma we have faced due to a poor health system is simply being irresponsible".

Meanwhile, Sudarshan Jain, Secretary General, Indian Pharmaceuticals Association, said that this is India's first post vaccination budget and the policy consistency is maintained. The planned increase in capital expenditure is likely to boost economic growth and employment, he added.

"There is a thrust on macro areas like digital, VC-ecosystem, ease of doing business and supportive measures for R&D and industry-academia collaboration with Pharma included in the Sunrise sectors. The extension time limit for the commencement of business to claim benefits of concessional tax regime for manufacturing companies has been extended by a year to 31 March 2024. This will support the investment in pharma manufacturing. Details are being examined and the implementation will be key going forward," said Jain.

"The budget has not addressed many of the issues highlighted by large parts of the Healthcare industry like streamlining of GST and reduction of Customs Duty. The rolling back of the health cess is other demand which will help us preserve jobs which are instrumental in making the healthcare workers become patient ready", said Pavan Choudary, Chairman, Medical Technology Association of India.

Choudary added that some demands have not been accepted, but still budget is reflective of the realisation that healthcare is a vital sector. The focus on Gati-Shakti will bolster infrastructure and increase overall competitiveness of the industry and is therefore most welcome.

Satyender Goel, Founder & CEO, India Health Link, said that the National Digital Health Ecosystem in the age of digitation and rollout of 5G technology would make healthcare accessible to the needs of over 1.4 billion population in India.

"The digital registries of health providers and health facilities, unique health identity and universal access to health facilities provided under the National Digital Health Ecosystem will provide access to healthcare digitally in the remotest of areas," he added.

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