

GOA TOOK A PIONEERING STEP IN PUBLIC HEALTH : RANE
Releases Goa Policy for Life-course Immunization & Operational
Guideline

Panaji: September 23, 2026

With the release of the Goa Policy for Life-course Immunization 2026-2036, together with its Operational Guideline today Goa is taking another pioneering step in public health asserted Minister for Health Shri Vishwajeet Rane and further mentioned that with this initiative, Goa becomes the first State in the country to come forward with a comprehensive Policy for Life-course Immunization.

Shri Rane was speaking at a function organized by the Directorate of Health Services to launch Goa Policy for Life Course Immunization at Sta. Inez Panaji today.

The Minister further said that this is an achievement we should recognize. But more importantly, it is a responsibility we should embrace - as Goa is not merely releasing a policy today but showing what the future of preventive healthcare in India can look like. For generations, immunization has been one of the strongest pillars of public health. India has made enormous progress in protecting children against vaccine-preventable diseases, he added.

The Minister said people today are living longer. More people are surviving with chronic diseases. Our hospitals and clinics are caring for increasing numbers of people with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, kidney disease, cancer and multiple long-term conditions. Therefore, he said the idea that vaccination belongs only to childhood is no longer sufficient. We are a State that has always aspired to provide high-quality public healthcare. We have strong institutions. We have experienced clinicians. We have a health system that is capable of innovation. And most importantly we have the ability to bring policymakers, doctors, programme officials, researchers and communities together around a common purpose, he pointed.

The Minister further said when evidence tells us that healthcare needs to change, Goa should not be afraid to change. A healthy young adult is different from an elderly person. A patient with diabetes is different from a person with chronic lung disease. A patient undergoing treatment for cancer or kidney disease may have different clinical needs again. Therefore, Goa's approach is based on risk, evidence and clinical need.

Shri Rane appreciated the work of the Directorate of Health Services, which has carried much of the responsibility for translating this vision into services. The people working within the system - doctors, nurses, programme officers, pharmacists, administrators and field staff and he specially acknowledged the Goa Institute of Management, particularly for their important contribution. Their effort in synthesizing the research evidence, sustained engagement with the Directorate of Health Services, clinicians, policymakers and other stakeholders has helped bring together the evidence, consultations and policy thinking that contributed to the development of this Policy and others for their contribution in making this initiative successful.”

Secretary Health Shri Yatindra Maralkar, IAS while addressing the gathering said The Goa Policy for Life-course Immunization 2026-2036 marks a vital step in strengthening preventive healthcare across our state.

Shaped by Goa's evolving demographic and epidemiological profile, the policy responds to the rising burden of non- communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic respiratory illnesses, he said.

Shri Maralkar maintained that the strategy of the Government is to extend protection beyond childhood through a risk-based prioritization approach. Rather than immediate universal adult vaccination, we are focusing initially on clinical high-risk groups who need it most. Based on rigorous evidence regarding disease burden, safety, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness, we are prioritizing three vaccines in the short term: influenza, pneumococcal disease, and hepatitis.

Shri Maralkar on ensuring efficient delivery said that this initiative will be integrated directly into our existing health infrastructure-building upon established NCD clinics, specialist services, and current cold- chain systems. He said the Directorate of Health Services will provide overall governance, with District Immunization Officers and healthcare facilities leading on-ground screening, vaccine administration, safety monitoring, and digital tracking. Designed as a dynamic 10-year framework, the policy will be periodically reviewed and updated in line with emerging evidence and new technologies he informed. .

Professor GIM Dr.Ajay Vamadevan in his address said translating this idea into an actual State Policy required much more than identifying a list of vaccines. Over the past year, the policy-formulation exercise progressed through several stages, involving a team of experts from DHS, GMC and GIM, with inputs from experts from leading national institutions and scientific bodies, he said.

Prof. Dr Vamdevan speaking further informed that they began by examining the available evidence on adult vaccination, vaccine-preventable diseases and the changing health profile of Goa. At the same time, we looked closely at the realities of our own health system-because a scientifically desirable intervention must also be feasible to implement.

Dr. Vamadevan maintained that implementation of this policy will also give Goa an important opportunity to generate evidence. The lessons we generate should help us continuously improve the programme in Goa and will also help contribute to the growing national and international efforts on adult and life- course immunization.

CMO\NCDC, DHS Dr.Sandesh Madkaikar, AHPSR/WHO Dr. Aku Kwamie also spoke on the occasion.

Dean GMC Dr. J.P. Tiwari, AHPSR/WHO Dr. Aku Kwamie, OSD Health Minister Dr Rajnanda Desai,, Secy. Health Shri Yatindra Maralkar IAS, Jt.Secy Health Shri Pranav Bhat, Director DHS Dr. Medha Salkar, CMO NCDC, DHS Dr.Sandesh Madkaikar, Professor Dept. of Community Medicine PGIMER Dr. Madhu Gupta, Director GIM, Prof. Ajay Vamadevan faculty members of GMC, WHO and others present at the function

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