

EX-SERVICEMEN'S CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME



ECHS NEWSLETTER : THIRD EDITION
SEP 2024

MD`s Note

Dear Veterans and Family Members,

I am delighted to present our esteemed members and stakeholders the third edition of the Ex-servicemen's Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) Quarterly Newsletter. The inaugural edition of this newsletter was received well by our esteemed veterans. The focus of the Central Organisation ECHS has been towards enhancing beneficiary satisfaction through enhanced reach, improved medicine availability, better quality health care by empanelled hospitals & simpler procedures.

Through this newsletter, we tried to convey our initiatives and the latest developments to our esteemed beneficiaries. Your participation in this process through awareness of ECHS rules and suggestions for improvement will strengthen the scheme. Feedback is welcome and may be communicated to the Director Communications, also the Editor of this Newsletter. Wishing you all good health and success.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Manoj Natarajan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(Manoj Natarajan)

Major General

Managing Director

Ex-Servicemen's Contributory Health Scheme

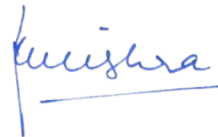
From the Editor's Desk

Respected Readers,

It is with great anticipation that we present the third edition of the ECHS Quarterly Newsletter to keep our esteemed ex-servicemen abreast of the latest developments, health initiatives, and essential updates related to our shared commitment to well-being.

This third edition has been curated after incorporating the suggestions proffered by our esteemed veterans. An update on the latest developments in ECHS aimed at higher beneficiary satisfaction have been presented in this edition. I would also appeal to our veterans to send further suggestions through email to dir.pm@echhs.gov.in Thank you for being a part of this endeavour. We look forward to building a vibrant and informed community that prioritises health and camaraderie.

Warm Regards,



(PK Mishra)
Colonel
Director (Communications)
Editor, ECHS Quarterly Newsletter

QTRLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE PERIOD FROM
01 JUL 2024 TO 30 SEP 2024

Recent Policy Changes/Initiatives in ECHS

- To enhance functional readiness of Polyclinics, Annual Inspection is being carried out every Financial Year comprising representatives of Regional Centres, Station Headquarters and Senior Executive Medical Officer (SEMO).
- To ensure timely clearance of medical claims at Regional Centre level, 34 Numbers of medical approver have been allocated to Regional Centres in addition to initial manpower allotment.
- Government of India/ Ministry of Defence has approved construction of permanent building in Type C & D Polyclinics at 75 locations as part of '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**'. Out of 75 locations, Approval in Principal (AIP) for 43 Polyclinics have been accorded and 23 Cr funds have been released.
- As part of strengthening of Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) service, Opening of 21 new Polyclinics at Upgradation of 50 existing Polyclinics, induction of 130 Medical Mobile Unit (MMU) including enhancement of contractual staff at Polyclinics is under consideration with Ministry of Defence.

Budgetary Allocation for ECHS

With the gradual increase in the beneficiary base and increase in the cost of quality medical treatment, annual budgetary allocation for ECHS has witnessed substantial increase in the recent years. In the last financial year Rs 9880.99 Cr was allotted towards ECHS budget. This year, so far, an amount of Rs 6968 Cr has been released so far. More funds have been demanded and further allotments are expected in the RE and BE stage.

Recent Changes in Automation

Following changes in procedure have been brought about for the convenience of our beneficiaries:-

- **Teleconsultancy of E-Sehat.** E-Sehat pilot project has been launched at 12 x ECHS polyclinics. The service will facilitate ECHS beneficiaries to take online Teleconsultancy from their place without visiting to ECHS polyclinics. The facility of home delivery of medicines will also be extended in near future.

- **Waiver for Annual Validation for 64KB ECHS Smart Card Holder above 80 Years of Age.** ECHS beneficiaries of 80 years of age have been exempted for annual validation.
- **Restoration of BPA Portal.** Due to outage of UTI-ITSL CSP data center site. The BPA portal remained down for 09 days wef 26 Sep 2024. The BPA services have been fully restored from 04 Oct 2024 onwards and all online ECHS bill processing services have been made fully operational. To address such changes in future, a structured plan is being made at ECHS to ensure that the services are restored within minimum time, there is a backup of data and no loss of data takes place due to sudden outage.
- **Upgradation of IT Infrastructure.** The ECHS polyclinics are holding certain old vintage and obsolete IT infrastructure that include high end servers and desktop PCs. CO ECHS has planned to gradually replace these vintage and obsolete equipment in a phased manner. CO ECHS has compiled the details of such IT equipment for projecting additional demand of fund for procurement of such IT equipment.
- **Delay in Printing of Cards.** 64 KB ECHS Smart Card printing has been stopped temporarily by M/s SDCPL upto 15 Nov 24 due to delay in receipt of cards by vendor. Validity of temporary slips will be extended accordingly for beneficiaries to avail ECHS facilities.

Medical Matters

- **Clarification on revised guidelines for referral process in ECHS:-** Previously, for individuals under 75 years of age in the ECHS (Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme), every test required a new referral from the polyclinic. However, in practice, ECHS allowed veterans to proceed with investigations as advised, without needing to return for each referral.
- The CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme) issued a new rule in a letter on 2nd September, stating that for investigations costing below Rs 3000, no separate referral is required. However, for CT scans, MRIs, and tests costing above Rs 3000, a new referral from the polyclinic is till necessary.

- Veterans expressed frustration with the need for multiple visits. To address this, it has now been decided that with the initial referral, veterans can complete all investigations—including CT scans, MRIs, and tests above Rs 3000—without needing to return to the polyclinic for a separate referral.
- Additionally, the age threshold for veterans requiring a primary referral has been lowered from 75 to 70 years. Veterans above 70 no longer need the primary referral. A special provision has been made to simplify the process for veterans.
- **Guidelines & Ceiling rates for Lung Transplant, Heart Transplant Surgery in respect of ECHS Beneficiaries –Reg.** It is directed to convey the approval of competent authority to issue guidelines for Lung Transplant/ Heart Transplant Surgery in respect of ECHS members and their beneficiaries:-
 - The ceiling rates for the surgery are as under:-

• Lung Transplant	-	Rs. 25 Lakhs
• Heart Transplant	-	Rs. 15 Lakhs
• Heart & Lung Transplant (combined)	-	Rs. 35 Lakhs
- **Guidelines for availing treatment by ECHS beneficiaries for Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Based Behavioral Therapy in Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)/ Non-Autistic person/ Children with ADHD and Specific Learning Disabilities.** The guidelines for availing treatment under ECHS for Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Based Behavioral Therapy in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)/ Non-autistic person/ children with ADHD and specific learning disabilities are laid down in the policy and the same is available on the website with the subject.
- **Empanelment / Dis-empanelment of hospital/Nursing Home and Diagnostic Centres for ECHS:-**
 - The 69th Screening committee meeting for empanelment/dis-empanelment of medical facilities held on 24 May 2024. 40 Private Hosp/ Nursing Home and Diagnostic Laboratories for different specialties empanelment with ECHS.

- The 71th Screening committee meeting for empanelment/dis-empanelment of medical facilities held on 04 Jul 2024. 15 Private Hosp/ Nursing Home and Diagnostic Laboratories for different specialties empanelment with ECHS and 07 private /Nursing home and Diagnostic centers was dis-empanelled.

Vigilance Matters

- **Geo-Tagged Photos.** To prevent fraud by empanelled hospitals in admission process, hospitals now have to mandatorily click and upload geo-tagged photos of the patients taken during admission as well as discharge.
- **Action by Beneficiaries.** ECHS beneficiaries and their attendants/ family members are requested to ensure that the hospitals click their photos during admission and discharge (especially during emergency admissions) without which the admissions will be rejected by respective polyclinics.
- **Discharge Summary/ Slip.** It has been observed that the discharge summary/ slips being uploaded by the hospitals in the claims for reimbursement differ from the ones provided to the patients at the time of discharge. It is seen that the hospitals fraudulently alter the discharge summary (without the knowledge of patients) to inflate the bills.
- **Action by Beneficiaries.** Beneficiaries are requested to ensure that they or their attendant sign the discharge summary and retain the same for future scrutiny by concerned Regional Centre if required. While being discharged they should also caution the hospital to not alter the discharge summary without their permission or else legal action will be initiated against them.