

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

### CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION

Press Release

#### Celebration of World Mental Health Day

**Chandigarh, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2017:** The Department of Psychiatry, GMCH today celebrated World Mental Health Day at Disability Assessment Rehabilitation and Triage (DART). DART is a rehabilitation facility for mentally ill patients who have recovered from the acute phase of mental illness and are having deficits in cognitions, vocational and social skills. It is the first such rehabilitation facility which is being set-up in the country in a medical college. World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness regarding mental health issues around the world. Each year WHO decides a specific theme and this year the theme is *Mental health in the workplace*. On this day, the Department of Psychiatry, GMCH, Sector-32 launched a **new service** called **Occupational Health Services at DART** on a weekly basis.

As per WHO, globally more than 300 million people suffer with depression (leading cause of disability) and another 260 million are living with anxiety disorders. According to prevalence figure of mental disorders in the country (NMHS, 2016), approximately 13% of Chandigarh adult population is suffering from common mental disorders (depression, anxiety disorder, alcohol and substance abuse, OCD, stress related and adjustment disorders) and another 2-3% has severe mental illness (SMI). This converts into huge absolute numbers. However, majority are not seeking treatment.

Today, both public and private sectors are operating under a lot of pressure in order to increase productivity and reduce the cost of production. This puts a lot of pressure on the employees affecting their physical and mental health. There is also pressure on an organization to retain competent and experienced staff. Rights of Persons with Disability Act (2016) provides protection in employment and thus the employee assert his right to be retained in the job with all the service benefits and on the other hand, the employer starts feeling the burden to retain in the organization a staff member whose performance is reduced due to ill-health. This creates an unhealthy and harsh work atmosphere where both the employee and employer suffer. This creates the need of a specialised service where a person who is experiencing stress and health issues can be examined and managed. The early recognition of such cases will be beneficial to both the parties. Occupational Health Services are being launched with the following objectives:

1. Creating awareness about occupational stress and mental health issues
2. Creating awareness about the specialized occupational mental health facilities
3. To set-up comprehensive mental health services. Such facilities should include screening and diagnosis of mental health issues, early intervention, health education, certification and awareness about legal rights of the employee and employer.
4. Brief assessment and referral for physical health problems
5. Capacity building of the employee through lifestyle changes
6. Identification and management of stigma and discrimination at workplace
7. Assessment of disability and capacity to work at workplace
8. Legal aid in occupational dispute cases
9. Reduce health care costs of injuries, diseases, illnesses and premature retirement, caused by a combination of occupational, environmental and life style.
10. Assistance in seeking medical insurance
11. Ensuring barrier-free environment for a person with disability
12. Developing models for prevention of stress and mental health problems at workplace
13. To set up counselling services for occupational health, including use of psychoactive substances at work place, aggression and violence, acquiring infections and accidents at workplace, bullying and harassment at workplace, etc.

The Occupational Health Services (OHS) was launched today by Sh. Anurag Agarwal, IAS, Home Secretary cum-Secretary Health UT Chandigarh in the presence of Dr. Askok Janmeja, Director Principal, Dr. B S Chavan, HOD Psychiatry cum Additional Director Mental Health Institute (MHI) and Dr. Nitin Gupta, Medical Superintendent, MHI. Ms. Shikha Tyagi, Asstt Professor, Psychiatry Social Work was the coordinator for the programme. A cultural programme was presented by patients who are undergoing rehabilitation at DART. Approximately 50 patients come to DART daily and stay there between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm. They are engaged in different activities, depending upon their disability and skills.

OHS services will be delivered by a multidisciplinary team comprising a Psychiatrist, a Medical Officer, Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatric Social Worker and Nursing Staff.

During the launch of the special facility for employees of UT Chandigarh, the Home Secretary visited the new facilities created at DART for mentally ill patients. These facilities include Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment (CRHT) wherein a special team provides mental health services at home, vocational sections where mentally ill patients are trained and employed

(cutting and tailoring section, paper recycling, masala grinding and packing, computer section and jute bag making section), special ward for long-stay patients, free legal services and caregivers support group. The Home Secretary was also requested to approve Parivartan-a mental health support group- as the approved source for selling of products prepared by the recovered mentally ill patients. Parivartan is working for homeless mentally ill patients. Such patients are looked after by Parivartan at a residential facility called *Aavaas* at Sector 47. Total cost of medication, stay, food and recreation is taken care of by Parivartan with the support of an MNC called Allengers Medical systems Ltd.