

VIEWS OF DR. V K PAUL, NITI AYOJ and DR. RANDEEP GULERIA, AIIMS as per the directions of Hon'ble High Court in the WP(C) 6756/2020 & CM 23455/2020, 26359/2020 dated 24.12.2020

As per the directions of Hon'ble High Court of Delhi dated 24.12.2020 in the above mentioned case, views were solicited from us, namely, Dr V K Paul, NITI AYOJ and Dr. Randeep Guleria, AIIMS, by the Health & Family Welfare Department, GNCT of Delhi.

All the relevant documents including the impugned order of 12.09.2020 of GNCT of Delhi with respect to the reservation of 80% ICU beds for COVID in 33 hospitals, vacancy position in the 33 hospitals, de-escalation committee etc were provided to us. Meeting was conducted between us at 5 PM on 26.12.2020 to formulate views on the impugned order dated 12.09.2020.

We took note of the declining trend of COVID infection in the NCT of Delhi. Further we are also cognizant of the fact that the total COVID ICU beds occupancy has dropped to about 23% as on today ie 26.12.2020. Further we have also noted that the occupancy of the said 33 hospitals on which the 12.09.2020 order applies to, is about 34% which is higher than the general COVID ICU bed occupancy of other hospitals.

We have studied the Report of the De-escalation committee of 23.12.2020. The committee has recommended that in all the Private Hospitals, COVID ICU beds should be de-escalated from the existing 80% reservation to 60% reservation, freeing up 20% COVID ICU beds for NON COVID.

After taking into account all the above materials submitted to us alongwith the current position, we have deliberated the matter in detail among us and submit following views

1. We are cognizant of the fact that the De-escalation committee has taken a considered and well rounded view. The committee has taken into account holistic picture of COVID response of NCT of Delhi and also the regional balance of COVID beds across NCT of Delhi. It has also examined the overall availability of the infrastructure including that in the government/public sector. We respect the due diligence and efforts made by the committee to come to the recommendations.

2. The new UK strain of COVID-19 is a new development which has witnessed itself to the country very recently. The new strain situation is still evolving in the country. About 20,622 persons have landed from UK (combined list of APHO and Nodal Officer Vande Bharat Mission, GNCT of Delhi) in Delhi, from 25.11.2020 to 23.12.2020. Further till now about 19 UK returnees have tested positive and their genome sequencing in underway in NCDC.

In view of the unfolding situation of the new strain, we are of the view that we should take abundant precaution and abrupt De-escalation is not advisable at this juncture.

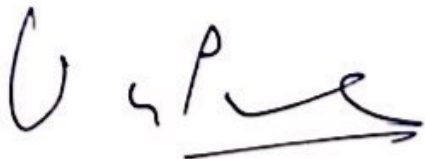


3. Further we should also be aware that we are at the cusp of the New Year 2021. We just had Christmas celebrations. The upcoming celebrations shall entail gatherings which may trigger super spreader event.

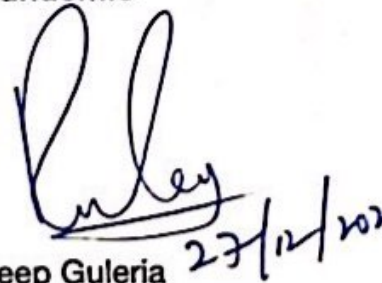
4. We have also noticed that trends have been observed with regards to the increased severity of COVID cases in recent days.

All the above factors compel us to be very cautious and vigilant with regards to the De-reservation of COVID ICU beds. Accordingly:

- We endorse the recommendation made by the De-escalation committee with regards to De-escalation of reservation of 80% COVID ICU beds to 60%, freeing up 20% COVID ICU beds for NON COVID.
- We are also ready to review the situation by 15.01.2021 as by the same time the situation with respect to UK strain will be better understood, impact of New Year Celebrations would have played out and Overall Pandemic condition in the NCT of Delhi may have settled.



Dr V K Paul 27/12/2020
Member, NITI AYOOG



Dr Randeep Guleria 27/12/2020

Director AIIMS