

## **Walk-in interviews for doctors in Himachal Pradesh: Health min**

The Himachal Pradesh government has decided to hold "walk-in" interviews of doctors and is considering increasing the retirement age of medical teachers to cope with shortage of doctors.

"The walk-in interviews will be held at the Directorate of Health services every Tuesday while the retirement age of Medical teachers may be raised for the doctors deployed in new medical colleges coming up in the state," said State Health and Family Welfare minister Kaul Singh Thakur at a programme here.

Thakur said that there are still about 650 vacant posts of doctors in government hospitals and despite taking many steps, the backlog of vacancies is still huge.

"The sanctioned strength of MBBS doctors has been increased from 1597 to 2091 and inspite of the recruitment of 516 doctors, the back log of vacancies is huge," said Thakur.

"To cope with the demand, the retirement age of General Duty Doctors (GDO) has been raised from 58 to 60 years while the retirement age of Medical Teachers, deployed in four new medical colleges coming up in the state has been raised to 65 and the same can be further raised to 70 years," he added.

Meanwhile, Singh announced that the Medical College at Nahan would become functional from this academic year.

"The Nahan College has got the nod for admissions from Medical Council of India(MCI) and Union Health ministry while the cases for seeking letter of permission for admitting 100 MBBS students each in other three colleges are being processed," said Thakur.

The first batch of Medical College at Nahan will have 100 students while the classes in Medical Colleges at Chamba and Hamirpur and the ESIC Medical colleges would commence from 2017-18.

Thakur was critical of BJP that preceded the Congress in the state, alleging that the health services in the state suffered heavily under BJP.

"The health services suffered during the BJP regime as doctors, nurses, male and female health workers, pharmacist, operation theater assistants and other para medical staff were not appointed," said Thakur.

"The Congress government not only recruited doctors and other staff but also opened and upgraded over two hundred health institutions during past three and a half years and provided the staff and infrastructure facilities," he added.

Thakur, who also holds the revenue department, said that 778 posts of Patwaris have been sanctioned and 1120 Patwaris have been sent for training to fill the posts.