

Health sector starved of specialists, says Shylaja

Despite reaching out to them, the government was finding it difficult to get specialist doctors on board the public health system, including the Primary Health Centres that needed quality uplift, Health Minister K.K. Shylaja said here on Thursday.

The government extended the validity period of the Public Service Commission results to accommodate willing specialists at various centres. “We want more specialists to join government health service. We identified 700 vacancies and issued 200 orders after scrutiny. But, only 54 specialists accepted the job,” she said at a meet-the-press organised by the Calicut Press Club.

On available specialists going on leave allegedly for lucrative overseas positions, the Minister said: “We have terminated 31 doctors for such unauthorised absence. But, that alone does not help improve the situation on the ground. We need more specialists taking up public health assignments from the primary to the tertiary level.”

The medical college hospitals too were in need of highly specialised and skilled doctors as the State government wanted to turn these into centres of excellence. “We have called for an action plan to achieve this.”

Better facilities for MCH

The government has already declared it wants to raise the standards of the medical college hospital to that of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi. “Its ranking at the national level is rising. But more needs to be done,” she said.

The Minister said she had held preliminary discussions on the needs of the Kozhikode hospital. The hospital needed a new block designed to serve as a well-equipped out-patient wing. The condition of the Casualty OP is very poor. The process to make improvements has not moved at the desired pace, she said.

“The Centre has provided Rs.150 crore for developing medical college hospitals in Kozhikode and Alappuzha. Along with the infrastructure, we need to change the old staff pattern to suit the growing public health needs. This is where the need for more specialist doctors is felt,” she said.