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# Health budget more on freebies, lacks dialogue on PPP: Doctors

**CHENNAI:** While the state government has allocated Rs 12,563.83 crore to the Health and Family Welfare Department, the lack of new innovative schemes being launched has upset healthcare providers in the state.

Stating that the increase in the budget allocation for the department— as opposed to the case for most other departments is more than welcome — a government doctor said, “Our government has focussed more on increasing the budget for freebies. They could have approached it better by coming up with something new. Besides, they could have focused on improving the state’s public-private partnership (PPP) by starting innovative schemes with private hospitals.”

The state government has increased its allocation of funds under the Muthu

Lakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme and the Chief Minister’s Health Insurance Scheme (CMCHIS). “The hike in the Muthu Lakshmi Reddy scheme is nothing but increasing the freebie. Instead, the government should have introduced some scheme for delivery in the private hospitals that are not empanelled under the CMCHIS. Additionally, the government could also have encouraged the private sector to come

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—Government doctor

up with some schemes,” he added.

With the CMCHIS having been combined with the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, most of the poor people have the card and are covered for Rs 5 lakh. They can approach any private hospital empanelled under the CMCHIS and avail high costing treatments like radiotherapy, said Dr K Shankar, a Cardiologist. “While this is being done, piling on funds for the same scheme can be a waste as it results in an overlap. The budget could be reduced for government hospitals and used for something new. Right now, it looks like there is a competition between the government and the private sector which is not healthy for the state,” he opined.

Also, he stressed on the need for the government to realize that they can unite with private hospitals in treating the public, instead of merely focusing on improving their facilities.



**FARM FRESH SALE** Farmers from across India sell the fruits and vegetables from their farms in ‘Sunny Bee’ Santhai held at Stella Maris College in Chennai on Sunday