Health Ministers to focus on promoting safe, nutritious food

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 9:

The Health Ministers of various states will be focussing on establishing a credible and robust national food testing eco-system and creating a positive regulatory environment.

These were among the key decisions taken at the “First Health Ministers Roundtable on Food Safety and Nutrition” organised by the Health Ministry in collaboration with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

Central support

Speaking at the roundtable, Minister of Health and Family Welfare JP Nadda said, “the Central government is providing support to the tune of ₹482 crore for the states. As many as 45 state labs are to be strengthened. I request the states to come forward with the proposals or give us the plan for strengthening the laboratories.”

He added that funds will not be a constraint and each state should have at least one high quality government food laboratory while bigger states should have two. Nadda also said that there was a need to shift the focus from disease and treatment centric healthcare to preventive and promotive healthcare.

Emergency response system

Recognising that safe and nutritious food is key to preventive healthcare, State Health Ministers have pledged to focus on improving convergence between the goals of National Health Mission and FSSAI’s safe and nutritious food initiative. This will include using funds from the National Health Mission to strengthen food safety systems in their states. They will also look at expanding the focus of their emergency response system set up under the National Health Mission to look into issues of food poisoning and food-borne illnesses.

State officials will also introduce content in school curriculum besides launching sustained campaigns to promote healthy eating habits among young adults and children.
FSSAI IN NEWS

Yellow Book

FSSAI has urged the states and Union Territories to advise their school education boards to use the ‘Yellow Book’, which has been launched by the food regulator to promote safe and healthy food at schools.

“The Ministers decided to promote and encourage supplies, distribution and retailing of fortified staples in the public distribution system as well as the open market and work towards fortification of all refined and packaged edible and all packaged milk by vitamin A and D to pave way to make it mandatory in near future,” an official statement added.