

## **UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The people of Himachal Pradesh appear to find higher value in the care provided by government facilities than do many Indians in other states. This study addresses curative health care services and examines the factors influencing demand for health care in the public and private sectors. It also considers available information on privately-delivered health care and how the government may wish to respond. At the same time, there are empirical reasons to question whether government health care is benefiting those who need it most. The health system in Himachal Pradesh has improved tremendously in past decades and is now entering a stage with adequate coverage of primary health services and shifting emphasis to secondary and tertiary care. Services at higher institutions are being strengthened with a growing focus on a more efficient allocation of resources across the different levels of the system. Some data suggest that people in the highest income categories are more likely to seek treatment from private clinics than those with lower incomes. To the extent that the health department wishes to improve health care for those with the fewest personal resources, this is a critical question, yet an issue on which robust data is sorely lacking. Challenges remain in Infant mortality and in children's nutritional status in Himachal Pradesh. There also remains substantial variation by district on many health and health care measures among districts in Himachal Pradesh: some simply are not making as dramatic improvements as others.

**KEY WORDS:** Himachal Pradesh, health care services.

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