

T.N. rolls out pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

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Tamil Nadu rolled out the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine under the Universal Immunisation Programme on Tuesday. This will benefit 9,23,000 children every year in the State.

Launching the vaccine at the urban primary health centre in Poonamallee, the Minister for Medical and Family Welfare Ma. Subramanian said currently, nine vaccines, including those for protection against hepatitis B, polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, rotavirus, measles and rubella, were in use for children in the State.

The Minister said pneumococcal conjugate vaccine was already rolled out in 21 States and was in use for the last two years. It would protect children against pneumonia and meningitis.

He told reporters that the previous AIADMK government did not show interest



A health worker administers the vaccine to a child at the municipal urban health centre at Poonamallee in Chennai on Tuesday. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

in rolling out the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in the State. The vaccine would be administered at six weeks and 10 weeks with a booster dose at nine months of age.

“In the private sector, one dose of this vaccine costs ₹4,000. The State government will spend ₹12,000 for

three doses of the vaccine for the children. It will be administered free,” he said.

He said the mothers would receive the handbook for vaccination, and would get reminders from the Health Department through SMS or WhatsApp for the remaining doses.

On COVID-19 vaccines, he said that according to information obtained under the Right to Information Act two months ago, nearly 8.3% vaccines were wasted earlier. “We have overcome the vaccine wastage, and have achieved better utilisation through the efforts of doctors and nurses,” he said.

He said that another one lakh doses of Covaxin and 1.5 lakh doses of Covishield was expected to reach Chennai on Tuesday. “Covaxin will be administered on priority basis for those who have received their first dose,” he said.

Mr. Subramanian and Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan are scheduled to meet the Union Health Minister on Thursday in Delhi. Among the issues to be discussed are increased supply of COVID-19 vaccines and starting admissions in the 11 new government medical colleges.