**PRESS RELEASE**

**Free Eye Camp for Underprivileged Children to Mark World Sight Day**

*An eye screening camp and diabetes awareness activities were conducted by the IIPH Hyderabad-PHFI for underprivileged children from VVS Laxman Foundation*

**Hyderabad, October 11, 2018:** The Indian Institute of Public Health (IIPH) Hyderabad-Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), in association with Pushpagiri Vitreo Retina Institute (PVRI), successfully provided an eye screening for underprivileged children. The screenings were conducted at First innings Play School and the children who were screened were from the VVS Laxman Foundation. The Foundation sponsors the education and sports training of meritorious students with financial constraints.

The eye care team provided an eye exam to 60 children. Along with eye screenings, the IIPH-PHFI and PVRI’s eye care team also talked to them about eye health and diabetes education through story sessions, drawing competitions, games and quiz. All said, the children participated with enthusiasm and went back with some key learning.

World Sight Day (WSD) is an annual day of awareness held on the second Thursday of October, to focus global attention on blindness and vision impairment. Children, especially in the poorest sections of the society, have the least access to eye care. They are also powerful agents for change, helping their families make decisions about health and access to health care. India is heading towards a major diabetes epidemic—and one of the consequences is irreversible blindness. To tackle this looming public health crisis, IIPH Hyderabad-PHFI in association with The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust UK, are working with several states to tackle causes avoidable blindness such as diabetes-related vision loss (diabetic retinopathy) and retinopathy of prematurity in new-born infants. Today’s exercise, IIPH and partners believe, will help raise awareness among children and their social networks.

Dr Jayaram, Registrar of Indian Institute of Public Health; Dr Rajan Shukla, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Public health; teachers and members of VVS Laxman Foundation, members of IIPH Hyderabad and PVRI were amongst those present for the eye screening camp.

‘I am happy that IIPH Hyderabad and PVRI conducted an eye screening camp for our Foundation’s students. It is especially important that children get an eye checkup regularly as it not just affects their studies but overall development and cognition. I welcome the steps taken by IIPH Hyderabad, in helping our future generation see better.’ said Mr VVS Laxman.

The school screening programme is part of [Indian Institute of Public Health Hyderabad’s](https://phfi.org/iiph-hyderabad/) diabetic retinopathy (DR) India initiative that aims to develop and integrate services for early detection and management of diabetic retinopathy into government health systems. Funded by the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, the DR programme is being successfully implemented in 10 states across India. Since the start of the programme, 45,000 individuals have been screened for DR and 3000 treated.

‘Through such eye screening camps, we have an excellent opportunity to talk to children about diabetes. We expect to see an explosion in diabetes cases in the near future. It is important we catch them young and teach them about prevention and management of diabetes—and the many consequences of diabetes, including irreversible sight loss,’ said Dr G V S Murthy, Director, Indian Institute of Public Health.

To strengthen India’s public health institutional and systems capability, and to apply knowledge to achieve better health outcomes for all sections of people PHFI has set up five Indian Institutes of Public Health (IIPHs) in Gandhinagar, Delhi NCR, Hyderabad, Bhubaneshwar and Shillong. The IIPHs are envisioned as world class public health institutions capable of responding to public health challenges of the state, region, and the country. Working as an interlinked network, the IIPHs function as vibrant hubs for public health education, training, research and practice with a strong health system connect. The IIPHs are set up in partnership with the respective state governments.

**Notes to editors**

For more information or to request interviews with Dr GVS Murthy, please contact Public Health Foundation of India Press Office

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**About the Public Health Foundation of India**

The Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) is working towards building a healthier India. It is helping to address the limited institutional and systems capacity in India by strengthening education and training, advancing research and technology and facilitating policy and practice in the area of Public Health. PHFI is headquartered in New Delhi with national presence through its constituent units of four regional Indian Institutes of Public Health (IIPH) and Centres of Applied Research in core public health themes. The Foundation, established in 2006 as a public private initiative, is governed by an independent board comprising of senior government officials, eminent Indian and International academic and leaders, civil society representatives and corporate leaders. For more information visit [www.phfi.org](http://www.phfi.org)

**About The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust:**

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust is a charitable foundation established in 2012 to mark and celebrate Her Majesty The Queen’s 60-year contribution to the Commonwealth. The Trust has received donations from governments, corporate partners, trusts, foundations, community groups and individuals from across the Commonwealth. Its mission is to enrich the lives of people from all backgrounds within the Commonwealth, and its programmes work in alliance towards eliminating avoidable blindness and to empower a new generation of young leaders. With a five-year time frame in which to deliver successful programmes, the Trust’s aim is to leave a lasting legacy, owned by the whole Commonwealth, to honour Her Majesty The Queen. For more information please visit [www.jubileetribute.org](http://www.jubileetribute.org).