

Budgetary allocation to Ayurveda : Empowering traditional healthcare system

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The recent Union Budget 2026-27 has allocated Rs. 4,408.93 crore to the Ministry of AYUSH, marking a substantial 20% increase from the revised estimates of Rs. 3,671.82 crore in FY 2025-26. This rise, with targeted initiatives like a 66.5% hike in the National AYUSH Mission (to Rs. 1,300 crore) and the announcement of three new All India Institutes of Ayurveda, shows a renewed governmental commitment to elevating traditional healthcare systems^(1,2).

Ayurveda, one of the world's oldest documented medical systems, has grown for millennia through its emphasis on preventive care, personalized treatment, and harmony with nature. Rooted in ancient texts like the Charaka and Sushruta Samhitas, it offers time-tested approaches to wellness that address not just symptoms but root causes, often with minimal side effects. In an era dominated by modern allopathic medicine, where chronic lifestyle diseases—diabetes, hypertension, stress-related disorders, and autoimmune conditions—are increasing, Ayurveda's preventive and integrative approach provides an alternate pathway. The increased budgetary support arrives at this moment when global interest in natural, sustainable healthcare is increasing, driven by post-pandemic awareness of immunity, mental health, and holistic living⁽³⁻⁵⁾.

This financial allocation is not merely about numbers; it signals a strategic shift toward institutional strengthening and mainstream integration. The establishment of three new All India Institutes of Ayurveda will expand high-quality education, advanced clinical training, and research, producing more skilled practitioners and generating robust scientific evidence for Ayurvedic interventions. Upgrades to AYUSH pharmacies, drug-testing labs, and the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar will enhance quality assurance, standardization, and global credibility—critical steps to position Indian traditional medicine as a reliable export and contributor to medical tourism⁽⁶⁻⁸⁾.

The benefits of such allocations extend far beyond infrastructure. Enhanced funding for the National AYUSH Mission will increase AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres, making preventive and promotive care accessible in rural and underserved areas, potentially reducing the burden on overburdened allopathic facilities. Increased support for research under schemes like AYURGYAN and autonomous

bodies such as the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences will increase evidence-based validation, bridging the gap between tradition and modern science. This could accelerate innovations in areas like herbal formulations, personalized medicine, and integrative protocols for chronic diseases⁽⁹⁻¹³⁾.

Moreover, empowering Ayurveda aligns with broader national goals: promoting self-reliance in healthcare, boosting employment in wellness sectors, and capitalizing on India's soft power. As global demand for natural therapies grows—evident in the rising export of Ayurvedic products and wellness tourism—these investments position India to capture a larger share of the traditional medicine market, projected to expand significantly in the coming years⁽¹⁴⁾.

Critics may argue that allocations remain less relative to the overall health budget or question the pace of integration and evidence generation. Yet, the consistent upward trend—from earlier years' lower allocation to this increase—demonstrates progressive intent. Challenges like uneven regional implementation, standardization of practices, and rigorous clinical trials must be addressed to maximize impact, but the current direction is encouraging.

In essence, increasing budgetary support for Ayurveda is an investment in a pluralistic healthcare ecosystem. It honors India's cultural heritage while adapting ancient wisdom to contemporary needs, ultimately giving citizens more choices for health and well-being. As the government continues this momentum, Ayurveda has the potential to evolve from a traditional alternative into a mainstream pillar of India's healthcare future⁽¹⁵⁾.

Looking ahead, the establishment of these three new All India Institutes of Ayurveda, alongside the upgradation of existing infrastructure such as pharmacies and drug testing laboratories, is poised to create a positive impact across the sector. These institutes will not only train a new generation of Ayurvedic physicians and researchers but also make it possible interdisciplinary collaborations, potentially leading to breakthroughs in evidence-based Ayurvedic treatments for prevalent conditions like metabolic disorders and mental health issues. By emphasizing skill development and quality control, the budget addresses long-standing concerns about variability in Ayurvedic practices, paving the way for greater acceptance both domestically and internationally.

Furthermore, this budgetary push aligns seamlessly with India's ambition to become a global leader in medical value tourism and wellness exports. With the addition of regional AYUSH medical hubs and enhanced international collaborations through the upgraded WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar, the country is strategically positioning itself to attract health seekers from around the world seeking holistic, natural therapies. This could significantly boost foreign exchange earnings, create thousands of jobs in hospitality, wellness, and related services, and reinforce India's role as the "Wellness Capital" of the world, while ensuring that traditional knowledge systems contribute meaningfully to sustainable development goals in healthcare.

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