

Experts welcome IRDA's move to include 'mental illness' in health insurance coverage

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New Delhi: Despite its high prevalence in India, especially among senior citizens, mental illness is a stigma in our society. According to a study, 1 of 5 of the older adults are suffering from one or the other mental health problems in India.

In its recent notification, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) has asked insurance companies in India to include the mental illnesses in the health insurance schemes. IRDA is an autonomous, statutory agency tasked with regulating and promoting the insurance and re-insurance industries in India.

The move is being considered as a major step towards the recognition of mental health issues as serious ones, which otherwise have been ignored due to social taboo. The experts have hailed the remarkable initiative of IRDA, calling it a timely one.

As per Mr Swadeep Srivastava, Managing Partner and Chief Belief Officer of IVHSeniorCare,

“IRDAI’s initiative takes the society a step closer to perceive, accept, understand and normalize the concept of mental illness which will further reduce stigma and hence, distress among the people suffering from mental illness. This move is highly relevant especially for the elder population who fight loneliness, depression, anxiety and other mental distress. IVHSeniorCare, committed to the cause of improving quality of life for our senior citizens, welcomes and applauds IRDAI’s decision of making health insurance more inclusive by bringing mental illness under health insurance cover.”

“As per National Mental Health Survey conducted by NIMHANS in 2016, 15% of Indians above 18yrs of age are in need of active interventions for one or more mental health issue. By covering mental health in health insurance, India takes a big step towards being progressive – especially with regards to healthcare. At HealthCare atHOME, we believe mental wellbeing has a big impact on physical wellbeing. By providing quality healthcare solutions at home, along with physical comfort, we also strive to provide our patients with mental peace and reducing their mental stress. We applaud IRDAI’s decision,” said Mr Vivek Srivastava, Co-Founder and CEO, HealthCare atHOME (HCAH).

“This will ensure a life of dignity to those who have mental health issues. “We believe it will certainly create awareness, acceptance, and inclusion when it comes to mental illness as any other ailment, while bringing mental health disorders at par with physical illnesses will ‘normalize’ diagnoses, reducing associated myths and stigma,” mentioned Ms Jyoti Punja, Chief Operating Officer and Customer Officer, Cigna TTK Health Insurance Company.”