

## Training Medical Professionals for extending Healthcare to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

**17 November 2019 Delhi:** A Special Olympics Healthy Athletes – Train the trainer (TTT) was conducted on 16 and 17 November 2019 at the Frank Anthony Public School New Delhi, across the five disciplines of Fit feet, Healthy Hearing, Health Promotion, Opening Eyes and Special Smiles. Approx. 10 persons in each of the five disciplines from the medical fraternity were trained as Clinical Directors in that specific discipline. The seminar consisted of a one day didactic program and the next day on site screening program. The program was supported by the youth volunteers and “Athlete Leaders” (who trained as Health Messengers)

A Clinical Director (CD) is an individual who volunteers to lead a Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program in a particular discipline. Minimum of a three year commitment to serve as a volunteer Clinical Director is mandatory before confirmation of training opportunity.

The five disciplines were led by the following Resource:

Name	Discipline	Designation
Dr Reena R Kumar	Special Smiles (Dental)	Regional Clinical Advisor- India
Dr Prithi Rekhi	Opening Eyes (Eye care and vision)	Regional Clinical Advisor- India
Dr Devender	Fit Feet (Podiatry)	Regional Clinical Advisor- India
Dr Veenu Seth	Health Promotion (Nutrition and blood pressure etc)	Regional Clinical Advisor- India
Nunu Nomonde Mtshazo	Healthy Hearing (audiology)	Regional Clinical Advisor- South Africa

### Mr Dipak Natali, Acting President and Managing Director, Special Olympics Asia Pacific:

“For many of us, seeing a doctor or seeking any kind of medical assistance can be an intimidating and daunting experience. For many people with intellectual disabilities, this feeling can be even more acute. The issue is compounded by the stigma that people with ID face in the wider society, and they may end up not seeing a doctor at all, leading to all sorts of longer-term medical problems that may well have been avoided. Special Olympics Healthy Athletes offers people with intellectual disabilities a chance to see a trained medical professional and access healthcare on their own terms. Activities and workshops like the one being conducted in Delhi seek to train healthcare professionals so that they can better communicate and engage with people with ID, making sure that their healthcare needs don't get ignored. We are thankful to all of the wonderful volunteers who will make this event a success and we look forward to the continued involvement of all of the healthcare professionals who have been trained as they go forth to ensure that the healthcare needs of people with intellectual disabilities are met.”

**Quote from Air Marshal Denzil Keelor PVSM, KC, AVSM, VrC, Founder & CEO SO Bharat:**

While on one side the Health care of Special Athletes remains neglected, on the other the health professionals remain unaware and unprepared to examine persons with specifically, Intellectual Disabilities, further diminishing chances of health care. The greatest challenge remains in the fact that most of the Athletes are unable to communicate their discomfort or their condition or in some cases even express pain. I am delighted to see the interest and sensitization amongst the medical experts to reach out to this extremely marginalized segment of the society and increasing their chances of achieving greater heights and a healthier lifestyle.

**About Special Olympics Healthy Athletes**

Healthy Athletes® was developed because Special Olympics athletes cannot participate successfully in their sport unless they are in good health. Research and studies have shown that Special Olympics athletes experience an array of health problems and too frequently fail to receive, or have limited access to, the health care they need. In an effort to provide more health opportunities, improve understanding and training for health professionals, and increase access to health care for Special Olympics athletes, Healthy Athletes was formally launched in 1997. Health screenings are conducted at World Games as well as local, State and National Games, and occasionally at special events. Healthy Athletes screenings have provided free care to hundreds of thousands of Special Olympics athletes. All Healthy Athletes screening areas maintain confidentiality of each athletes' health information. The screening data are aggregated and assessed to improve individual athlete health, and to assist in policy recommendations and advocacy for improved health care for Special Olympics athletes around the world.

**Program Supported by:**



**About Special Olympics Bharat** Special Olympics Bharat is a National Sports Federation recognized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of India and the accredited program of the Special Olympics International, USA. It is spread across all the States and Union Territories of India having registered over 1.4 Million Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities. Special Olympics is a global inclusion movement using sport, health, education and leadership programs every day around the world to end discrimination against and empower people with intellectual disabilities. Founded in 1968, and celebrating its 50th Anniversary last year, the Special Olympics movement has grown to more than 5 million athletes and Unified partners. With the support of more than 1 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 32 Olympic-type sports and over 108,000 games and competitions throughout the year. In the Asia Pacific region, Special Olympics has touched the lives of more than 1.7 million athletes across 34 countries.

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