

8th Knowledge Sharing Virtual Seminar Session

Date: September 3, 2025 (Wednesday)

Time: 3.00 PM - 4.30 PM BST (GMT+6)

Topic: Urban Health and Access to Drug and Medicine

Seminar Minutes

On Wednesday, September 3, 2025, the Bangladesh Urban Health Network (BUHN) successfully organized its 8th Knowledge Sharing Virtual Seminar titled “**Urban Health and Access to Drug and Medicine**.” Held via Zoom from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM BST (GMT+6), the session was expertly moderated by *Maliha Khan Majlish*, Project Associate at BUHN. The seminar primarily focused on the challenges of accessing safe and affordable medicines in urban areas, particularly for marginalized populations. Experts highlighted critical issues such as regulatory barriers, inequitable distribution, and the unique needs of women and slum dwellers. The discussions concluded with a strong call for better coordination among ministries and stakeholders to ensure improved drug accessibility and affordability in Bangladesh’s urban health landscape.

Seminar Agendas:

- Welcome speech
- Panel discussion
- Open Discussion/ Q&A Session
- Speech by the Chief Guest
- Closing remarks and next step

Seminar Discussions:

SN	Discussion Points	Seminar Discussion
1	Welcome Speech	Dr. Margub Aref Jahangir , Health Specialist (Urban), Health Section, UNICEF Bangladesh, welcomed participants by stressing the urgent need to ensure equitable, safe, and affordable access to medicines in urban Bangladesh, especially for the poor and vulnerable while calling for strengthened pharmaceutical governance, innovative solutions, and collective dialogue to close equity gaps.
2	Panel Discussion	Major (Retd.) Dr. Md. Khoshroz Samad, Guest Classified Specialist, Pharmacology, Armed Forces Medical College & Member, Executive Council, Bangladesh Pharmacological Society (BDPS), emphasized the challenges of urban health in Bangladesh, particularly the high cost and limited access to essential medicines for non-communicable diseases, stressing the need for stronger regulation, inter-ministerial coordination, and digital health solutions. Professor Dr. Farhana Dewan, Member of the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB), highlighted the critical challenges urban and marginalized women face in accessing quality reproductive and maternal medicines, including ignorance of resources and frequent stockouts in facilities. She stressed the importance of a regulatory committee, stronger government–stakeholder collaboration, and the role of OGSB in ensuring drug

		availability and educating members to maintain essential medicine stocks for women's health. Dr. Kazi Saifuddin Bennoor, <i>Senior Consultant, United Hospital, Dhaka</i>, highlighted the growing burden of respiratory diseases in urban Bangladesh, driven largely by air pollution and health system disparities. He emphasized the urgent need for stronger coordination and regulation in urban health services and addressed critical gaps in medicine access where public facilities face low availability and private services remain costly and proposing solutions such as promoting generics, expanding free screening programs, and strengthening public drug supply systems. Rashed Rabbi, <i>Health Editor of Kalbela and President of the Bangladesh Health Reports Forum</i>, highlighted critical governance gaps in urban health, noting that the discontinuation of government operational plans has forced slum residents to bear higher medicine costs and face limited access to family planning. He also underscored the absence of timely medical response during the recent school tragedy, reflecting systemic weaknesses in urban healthcare delivery.
3	Open Discussion/ Q&A Session	Dr Sabiha Sultana Tonni, <i>a medical professional</i>, emphasized the critical role of gynecologists in promoting equitable access to essential medicines and pointed out significant disparities in drug availability across urban healthcare facilities. She stressed that addressing these gaps is vital to ensuring better maternal and child health outcomes in urban settings. Professor Dr. Farhana Dewan, <i>Member of the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB)</i>, highlighted the crucial role of senior gynecologists in guiding safe drug use during pregnancy and expressed concern over over-the-counter medication practices and frequent stock shortages, which disproportionately affect marginalized urban populations' access to essential medicines. Musharrat Jahan, <i>Manager - Policy Advocacy, Save the Children International</i>, highlighted the gaps in urban health strategies for slum dwellers, who remain largely dependent on NGOs for healthcare. She emphasized the importance of stronger community engagement and more effective systems for ensuring access to essential medicines. Maliha Khan Majlish, <i>Project Associate, BUHN</i> emphasized the importance of sensitizing stakeholders and compiling policy recommendations to address resource constraints and improve health services.

4	Speech by the Chief Guest	Mr. Md. Mamunur Rashid , Joint Secretary (World Health Wing), Health Services Division, MoHFW, underscored the government's ongoing initiatives to address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and to ensure equitable access to essential medicines, particularly in urban areas where the prevalence of NCDs is significantly high. He emphasized that platforms such as this type seminar organized by BUHN play a crucial role in generating actionable recommendations, which can guide policy decisions and strengthen national preparedness in the context of the upcoming Fourth UN High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of NCDs and the Promotion of Mental Health and Wellbeing (HLM4) in September 2025.
5	Closing remarks and next step	Dr. Md. Shamim Hayder Talukder , Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Eminence Associates for Social Development and Member Secretary of Bangladesh Urban Health Network (BUHN), extended his sincere thanks to all esteemed speakers, panelists and participants for their valuable insights, emphasizing that both non-communicable and emerging communicable diseases like dengue and chikungunya pose urgent challenges for urban health in Bangladesh, particularly as the urban poor face limited access to essential medicines. He reaffirmed BUHN's commitment to advancing solutions through continued dialogue, including the upcoming Policy Dialogue on Private Sector Engagement in Urban Health on September 22, 2025.

Seminar Decisions:

1. Ensure at least 80% availability of essential NCD and maternal health medicines in urban areas by improving supply chains and stock management systems.
2. Regularly revise the Essential Drug List with a focus on women's health and NCDs, and enhance supervision of drug distribution and availability.
3. Improve coordination between ministries, strengthen regulatory oversight of retail pharmacies, and raise awareness on post-LDC reforms for better urban pharmaceutical governance.
4. Foster collaborations with private actors and NGOs to expand affordable access to life-saving medicines, especially for urban poor and marginalized groups.
5. Develop and implement digital tools for prescription tracking, pharmacovigilance, and transparent monitoring of medicine availability.
6. Establish community pharmacy models, train and regulate informal providers, and prioritize vulnerable populations to reduce catastrophic health expenditure (CHE).

Attendance Sheet of the Seminar:

Following attendees from BUHN, UNICEF, DGHS, MoHFW, NGOs and other partner organizations joined the virtual seminar-

SN	Name	Designation	Organization
1.	Mr. Md. Mamunur Rashid	Joint Secretary (World Health Wing)	HSD, MoHFW
2.	Dr. Syed Kamrul Islam	Director (PHC & ITHC)	DGHS, MoHFW
3.	Major (Retd.) Dr. Md. Khoshroz Samad	Member, Executive Council	Bangladesh Pharmacological Society (BDPS)
4.	Dr. Kazi Saifuddin Bennoor	Senior Consultant	United Hospital, Dhaka
5.	Professor Dr. Farhana Dewan	Member	Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB)
6.	Dr. Margub Aref Jahangir	Health Specialist (Urban)	UNICEF Bangladesh
7.	Dr. Md. Shamim Hayder Talukder	Chief Executive Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
8.	Rashed Rabbi	President	Bangladesh Health Reports Forum
9.	Sainath Banerjee	Founder Director	Urban Plus Solutions, India
10.	Musharrat Jahan	Manager - Policy Advocacy	Save the Children International
11.	Mr. Anwar Hossain	Executive Director	Heed Bangladesh
12.	Khondker Rebaka Sun-Yat	Executive Director	Coalition for the Urban Poor-CUP
13.	Quazi Baby	Executive Director	Participatory Development Action Program (PDAP)
14.	Dr. Saiha Marjia	Senior Program Manager	BRAC Health program
15.	Dr. Abu Jamil Faisel	Chairman & Treasurer	Health21
16.	Sharif Mostafa Helal	Executive Director	Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition (BWHC)
17.	Elija Chambugang	PC, MNCH	Heed Bangladesh
18.	Ruma Khondaker	Senior Specialist-MHPSS	Save the Children International
19.	Dr Sabiha Sultana Tonni	Medical Professional	Individual
20.	Omar Faruk Akanda	Program Specialist	Light House
21.	Dr. Santosh Datta		
22.	Grace Suparna Chakraborty		
23.	Tanjina Farhana Upoma	UNV Health Officer	UNICEF Bangladesh
24.	Dr.Shahin Akter	Technical Operation Director	Eminence Associates for Social Development

25.	Ummay Farihin Sultana	Senior Research and Knowledge Management Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
26.	Maliha Khan Majlish	Senior Technical & Development Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
27.	Md. Wahiduzzaman	Urban Health Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
28.	Md. Saddam Hossain	Senior Data Management Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
29.	Md. Jahangir Alam	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (MEO)	Eminence Associates for Social Development
30.	Abhijeet Kumar Singh	Research & Communication Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
31.	Abir Chowdhury	IT Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
32.	Md. Shoriful Islam	Graphic Designer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
33.	Minhajul Islam	Health and Development Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development

Snapshot of the Seminar:

