

6th Bi-weekly Knowledge Sharing Virtual Seminar Session

Date: June 25, 2025 (Wednesday)
Time: 4.00 PM - 5.30 PM BST(GMT+6)

Topic: Urban Health in Bangladesh: Reflections on the Health Reform Commission Report

Seminar Minutes

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025, the Bangladesh Urban Health Network (BUHN) successfully hosted its 6th Bi-Weekly Knowledge Sharing Virtual Seminar titled “**Urban Health in Bangladesh: Reflections on the Health Reform Commission Report.**” Held via Zoom from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM BST (GMT+6), the seminar was moderated by *Maliha Khan Majlish, Project Associate* at BUHN. The session centered on critical discussions around the 2025 Health Reform Commission Report, which was officially submitted to the government on May 5, 2025. While the report introduced seven foundational pillars for comprehensive health sector reform, participants raised significant concerns about its ability to address the unique challenges of urban health. The discussion also highlighted the need for clearer implementation pathways and stronger focus on urban-specific health strategies to ensure meaningful reform outcomes in rapidly growing urban areas across Bangladesh.

Seminar Agendas:

- Welcome speech
- Presentation on “Urban Health in Bangladesh: Reflections on the Health Reform Commission Report”
- 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	<i>Dr. Margub Aref Jahangir, Health Specialist (Urban), Health Section, UNICEF Bangladesh</i> , warmly welcomed all participants to the webinar and emphasized that achieving equitable urban healthcare in Bangladesh requires establishing a unified health governance system, ensuring universal access to emergency services, and substantially reducing out-of-pocket healthcare expenses for the urban poor.
2	Presentation on “Urban Health in Bangladesh: Reflections on the Health Reform Commission Report”	<i>Dr. Md Saidur Rahman, Team Leader (Aalo Clinics), Partners in Health and Development (PHD)</i> , presented key reflections on the National Health Reform Commission’s work, highlighted key challenges and recommendations from the Health Reform Commission Report 2025, emphasizing a hybrid urban healthcare model, extended service hours, public-private partnerships, and the need to address social determinants of health. He also stressed better coordination between ministries and the importance of a clear framework for universal health coverage.

3	Panel Discussion	<i>Dr. Zahidul Quayyum, Professor of Health Economics & Director of Research, BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University,</i> highlighted the challenges and opportunities of integrating the private sector into Bangladesh's healthcare system, emphasizing the need for strategic purchasing, clear objectives, effective regulation, and risk management. He also underscored the importance of addressing social determinants of health and advocated for decentralized healthcare management and financing. <i>Dr. Halida Hanum Akhter, Member, Women's Affairs Reform Commission 2025,</i> emphasized establishing a clear referral pathway and women-friendly healthcare facilities to reduce out-of-pocket costs and improve access, while addressing the high rate of cesarean sections in the private sector and creating a system that guides people to appropriate primary healthcare. She also highlighted the need for a comprehensive plan to alleviate urban healthcare challenges and improve overall healthcare system. <i>Prof. Syed Md. Akram Hussain, Senior Consultant, Clinical Oncology & Radiotherapy,</i> highlighted the critical need for more primary care physicians and emphasized early detection of non-communicable diseases at the primary healthcare level.
4	Open Discussion/ Q&A Session	<i>Sainath Banerjee, Founder, Urban Plus Solution (India),</i> highlighted challenges in establishing ward-level urban health centers due to diverse urban populations and stressed the need for clear institutional arrangements, authority, and adequate resource allocation. <i>Dr. Fida Mehran, Health Systems Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh</i> suggested establishing a centralized urban health authority with district-level offices, and adopt a cohabitation model between local government and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for effective primary care and public wellness. <i>Dr. Md. Shamim Hayder Talukder, BUHN Member Secretary and CEO of Eminence Associates for Social Development,</i> highlighted the crucial role of private sector involvement, community leaders, and local government in urban health governance.
5	Speech by the Chief Guest	<i>Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Executive Chairman, Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC),</i> stressed the need to turn the commission's recommendations into practical actions and emphasized ongoing public discourse and advocacy to advance urban health reforms.
6	Closing remarks and next step	<i>Dr. Md. Shamim Haider Talukder, CEO of Eminence Associates for Social Development and BUHN Member Secretary,</i> thanked the seminar guests and participants, stressing the urgent need to advance a detailed Urban Health Action Plan focused on evidence, equity, and collaboration for sustainable urban health outcomes.

Seminar Decisions:

1. Create a centralized urban health authority with clear institutional arrangements, incorporating collaboration between the Ministry of Health, local governments, and other stakeholders to ensure coordinated service delivery.
2. Formulate a comprehensive, evidence-based action plan grounded in equity and multisectoral collaboration to address urban health challenges sustainably.
3. Implement a healthcare delivery system combining hospital-based primary care, community outreach, and public-private partnerships with extended service hours to improve accessibility and affordability.
4. Enhance the role of the private sector through strategic purchasing, clear regulatory frameworks, and risk management to ensure quality and equitable healthcare services.
5. Establish clear referral pathways, reduce out-of-pocket expenses, and address specific issues such as high cesarean rates, while increasing the availability of primary care physicians and early NCD detection.
6. Allocate adequate resources for ward-level urban health centers and empower community leaders and local government to play active roles in urban health governance.

Attendance Sheet of the Seminar:

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

SN	Name	Designation	Organization
1.	Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman	Executive Chairman	Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC)
2.	Rui Liu	Health Specialist	Asian Development Bank (ADB)
3.	Halida Hanum Akhter	Member	Women's Affairs Reform Commission 2025
4.	Zahidul Quayyum, PhD.	Professor and Director	BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health BRAC University
5.	Dr. Fida Mehran	Health Systems Specialist	UNICEF, Bangladesh
6.	Prof. Syed Md. Akram Hussain	Senior Consultant	Clinical Oncology & Radiotherapy
7.	Dr Md Saidur Rahman	Team Leader	Aalo Clinics, Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
8.	Sainath Banerjee	Founder Director	Urban Plus Solutions
9.	Dr. Margub Aref Jahangir	Health Specialist (Urban)	Health Section, UNICEF Bangladesh
10.	Sharif Mostafa Helal	Executive Director	Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition (BWHC)
11.	Fatema Showkot Jahan Rojy	Senior Deputy Director	Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
12.	Shaikh Masudul Alam	Program Director	Bangladesh Health Watch
13.	Md Jahirul Alam Azad	Urban Health Specialist	Individual
14.	Dr. Md. Shamim Hayder Talukder	Chief Executive Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
15.	Dr Mohammad Mushtuq Husain	Advisor and Former Head	Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control & Research (IEDCR)
16.	Karar Zunaid Ahsan	Assistant Professor	UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health
17.	Masuda Begum	Director (Health and Nutrition)	Nari Maitri
18.	Mohammed Nabinur Rahman	Advocacy Advisor	Concern Worldwide
19.	Dr. Nazia Rahman	Project Coordinator	Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
20.	Md Harun-or-Rashid	Chief Executive	Light House
21.	Dr. Abu Jamil Faisel	Chairman & Treasurer	Health21
22.	S.M. Mazibur Rahman	Executive Director	Socio-Economic and Rural Advancement Association (SERAA)
23.	Quazi Baby	Executive Director	Participatory Development Action Program (PDAP)

24.	Dr Nasrin Romi	Senior Advisor, Health Systems	Ipas Bangladesh
25.	Mohammad Khairul Hasan		
26.	Syeda Umaiya Wali	MEAL Officer	Partners in Health and Development (PHD)
27.	Mollika Rani	Project Officer	Coalition for the Urban Poor - CUP
28.	Tanjina Farhana Upoma	UNV Health Officer	UNICEF Bangladesh
29.	Dr.Shahin Akter	Technical Operation Director	Eminence Associates for Social Development
30.	Ummay Farihin Sultana	Senior Research and Knowledge Management Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
31.	Maliha Khan Majlish	Senior Technical & Development Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
32.	Md. Wahiduzzaman	Urban Health Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
33.	Md. Saddam Hossain	Senior Data Management Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
34.	Mohammad Neamul Islam	Business Development Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
35.	Md. Jahangir Alam	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (MEO)	Eminence Associates for Social Development
36.	Md. Dipta Saha	Health and Development Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
37.	Abhijeet Kumar Singh	Research & Communication Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
38.	Abir Chowdhury	IT Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
39.	Md. Shoriful Islam	Graphic Designer	Eminence Associates for Social Development
40.	Minhajul Islam	Health and Development Officer	Eminence Associates for Social Development

Snapshot of the Seminar:

