

'Health expenses push 7% homes into poverty'

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Jaipur: Access to healthcare in India is marred by huge out-of-pocket expenses that pushes nearly 7 per cent of the households across the country into poverty every year. The blow is severe when the affected person is the sole earning member in the family, said a top central health official on Sunday.

"About 70 per cent of India's population resides in rural areas but the majority of tertiary healthcare services, which are the costliest, in terms of out-of-pocket expenses, are in urban areas. Poor people need more expensive health services than the top 40



per cent income-bracket of society," said Dr Indu Bhushan, chief executive officer of Ayushman Bharat.

The scheme — Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana or better known as Ayushman Bharat — has benefited over 3 lakh people since its launch in September, said Finance Minister Arun Jaitley last week. It is aimed at reducing ballooning expenditure for hospitalisation. **Full report P3**