

Pediatric Cardiology team at SL Raheja Hospital-A Fortis Associate successfully performs over 100 surgeries on children with Congenital Heart Disease (CHD)

~Over XX children screened at XX camps conducted across Maharashtra ~

~ The initiative was aimed at providing free surgeries across the state to bridge the gap in diagnosis and treatment available ~

Mumbai, 28th June, 2018: In India, Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) affects six to eight newborns in every 1000 live births. According to a study, about 1.5 lakh of infants are born with CHD each year in India. With an aim to save young lives with CHD, the Pediatric Cardiology team at **SL Raheja Hospital- A Fortis Associate** steered screening camps across rural Maharashtra. Over XX children were screened, of which 100 children underwent free cardiac surgeries at the hospital.

The screening camps were hosted across various Tehsils in Pune, Nashik, Indapur, Baduj, Satara, Sangli, Nadurbar, Baramati, Khedgaon, Raigad, Sangali, Dhule, Nashik, and a few locations in Mumbai. Apart from diagnosing children and bridging the treatment gap, the aim of these camps was to train medical caregivers in detecting cases of CHD. Out of the XX children screened at the camps, XX children were diagnosed and advised medical or surgical intervention, XX were diagnosed as 'blue babies' (lack of oxygen in the blood due to a congenital defect) and XX had deteriorated breathing patterns.

Dr. Vijay Agarwal, Director- Pediatric Cardiac and Transplant Surgery, SL Raheja Hospital – A Fortis Associate spearheaded this initiative, conducting corrective surgeries and providing medical intervention, along with his team. The corrective surgeries were performed at the hospital over the course of XX months. To ease the burden of these families, **Chief Minister's Relied fund (CMRF), Maharashtra, Fortis Foundation, Dr. Santosh Bhosle's Mentors Foundation, and Hon. Praveen Mane, President, Zilla Parishad, Pune District**, provided financial aid, both for intervention and post-intervention phases.

Speaking about the mass initiative undertaken by the hospital, **Dr Vijay Agarwal Director-Pediatric Cardiac and Transplant Surgery, SL Raheja Hospital – A Fortis Associate** said, *"Many children in our country are faced with heart related concerns, their parents remain unaware as they do not have access to diagnostics or treatment channels. Early symptoms are often ignored, which may lead to further complications. Unable to afford the cost of treatment, families are burdened as they try to care for the child. We at SL Raheja Hospital are proud to have undertaken this initiative, to help bridge this overwhelming gap. Every child deserves a healthy chance at life. We would also like to thank all our associated for supporting us in deploying this initiative".*

Hon. Omprakash Shete, Chief, Chief Minister's Relief Fund, Maharashtra, who undeniably played a pivotal role in easing the financial burden of the families, said, *"Chief Minister's Relief Fund's (CMRF) 'Project Aasha' provides financial aid to children from disempowered backgrounds, who suffer from Congenital Heart Diseases. Corrective surgeries and interventional aid provided by doctors at SL Raheja Hospital, have helped over 100 children live a better life. This brings us one step closer in ensuring a healthy future for the children of the state".*

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