

Message from the Health Minister, Punjab

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I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings to all participants of the 5th Annual Bring Brilliant Minds of Transfusion (BBMT)-Pakistan Conference. This event serves as an excellent platform for transfusion medicine professionals, healthcare providers, researchers, and policymakers to unite in addressing critical challenges in blood transfusion and thalassaemia management. The efforts of BBMT-Pakistan in organizing this conference, particularly with a focus on Safe Blood Transfusion and Thalassemia, are both commendable and urgently needed.

In Punjab, we take pride in being the pioneer of centralized blood transfusion services since 1948. This shows that we have long recognized the importance of safe blood transfusion services. We have made significant strides in improving the infrastructure and regulatory frameworks for blood transfusion. The Punjab Blood Transfusion Authority has been at the forefront of ensuring that safe, screened, and healthy blood is available to those who need it.

However, we recognize that more work needs to be done, particularly in addressing the growing burden of thalassemia in the province. This disease places a significant strain on our healthcare system, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that those affected have access to safe and reliable transfusion services, a priority for the Government of Punjab.

The key issues being discussed at this conference reflect the ongoing efforts needed to modernize and standardize healthcare services across Punjab province. We cannot underestimate the critical role that transfusion medicine plays in saving lives. I would like to highlight the

significant progress made in Punjab recently. Under our specialized healthcare initiatives, we have established modern Regional Blood Centres across the province, ensured adherence to strict screening protocols, and promoted voluntary blood donation campaigns. We are also working closely with national and international organizations to introduce the latest screening and testing technologies (e.g. CLIA) in our blood banks. However, we remain aware that the path to comprehensive, safe blood transfusion systems requires sustained effort, collaboration, and innovative solutions. The kind patronage and dynamic leadership of the worthy Chief Minister of Punjab, Ms. Maryam Nawaz Sharif has been central to the implementation of these healthcare initiatives, and she continues to take a very keen interest in the progress of healthcare welfare project.

I urge all participants to use this opportunity to promote meaningful collaborations and explore strategies to improve blood transfusion systems in Pakistan. Our collective efforts will undoubtedly lead to stronger healthcare services and better lives for our patients, especially those battling Thalassemia and other blood disorders.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my appreciation to BBMT-Pakistan for their dedication to advancing blood transfusion medicine in Pakistan. Your tireless efforts are helping shape the future of healthcare in our country. I wish the organizers and participants a successful and impactful conference, and I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that will arise from this important gathering.

Thank you,
Khawaja Salman Rafique
Minister of Specialized Health Care and
Medical Education
Government of Punjab