

Public Health Foundation of India and WomenLift Health Launch ‘Women’s Leadership in Public Health,’ a Collaboration to Drive Gender Equity in Public Health in India

New Delhi, February 8, 2024—The Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and WomenLift Health have embarked on a strategic collaboration to introduce **Women’s Leadership in Public Health (WLPH)**, a leadership development program for women scientists, fostering greater inclusivity in India's public health research, program, and policy ecosystem.

The program aims to buttress long-term and equitable improvements in India’s health landscape by enhancing the power and influence of mid-career women leaders from premier public health institutions in India. Beyond technical expertise, this program is designed to address systemic gender disparities that have impeded women’s access to leadership thus far. The inaugural 2024 edition of WLPH is targeted at women scientists who are gaining expertise with PHFI in disease burden estimation.

"By harnessing the collective potential of women scientists from a variety of esteemed research institutions in India, this collaboration embodies a commitment to amplifying the voices and impact of women leaders in public health," said Ayesha Chaudhary, India Director, WomenLift Health.

The program provides an immersive learning experience and a safe space to develop authentic, inclusive, strategic, and impactful leadership skills. Through culturally contextualized learning materials, the program aims to cultivate competencies in these leadership styles, ensuring a well-rounded approach to leadership development.

“This endeavor is designed to address inclusivity in the traditionally siloed areas of research and advocacy by elevating women’s leadership to shape a more equitable research landscape in India. This would also facilitate progress on women’s health, which remains a global priority,” said Prof. Rakhi Dandona, Professor, PHFI.

This collaboration underscores WomenLift Health’s goal of transforming public health leadership in India by driving institutional investments in women health leaders to influence the environments, systems, and cultures in which they work. The organization has also partnered with the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) and Grand Challenges India (GCI) [to advance women’s STEM leadership in the country](#).

“This is a step towards enabling ecosystem-level changes by engaging directly with institutions for greater gender equity and driving women-led development in India,” said Ayesha.

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About WomenLift Health

Established in 2019, we work to advance equality in health leadership through a range of actions at the individual, institutional, and societal levels. This includes “Leadership Journeys”, which focus on equipping mid-career women with tools, along with peer, mentor, and coach support, to successfully use their voice, expertise, and leadership for impact. It includes pushing conversations and partnerships with senior leaders in health institutions, taking steps to prioritize gender equality. It also includes supporting/ convening global conversations about the importance of women’s leadership, amplifying the voices of national and global health leaders, including at the biennial WomenLift Health Global Conference. WomenLift Health envisions a world where diverse, accomplished leaders collectively transform health outcomes. We work in North America, South Asia, East Africa, and Southern Africa and continue to explore expansion to other regions.

About the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI)

The Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) is a not for profit public - private initiative, which represents a “Partnership for Public Purpose”. PHFI is a response to the limited public health institutional capacity and was established to strengthen training, research and policy through interdisciplinary health system connected education and training, policy and programme relevant research, evidence based & equity promoting policy development, affordable health technologies, people empowering health promotion & advocacy for prioritised health causes in the area of public health in India. The Government of India enabled the setting up of PHFI in 2006 (registered as a Society). The Foundation is headquartered in New Delhi and its constituent Indian Institutes of Public Health (IIPH) established by PHFI have a presence in Hyderabad, Delhi NCR, Gandhinagar, Bhubaneswar, Shillong, and Bengaluru. An empowered governing board comprising senior government officials, eminent Indian and international academic and scientific leaders, civil society representatives and corporate leaders manages the Foundation.