

# Urban Health: An Overview

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# Introduction

The term "urban health" refers to the **network of institutions, organizations, services, and resources that collectively contribute to the health and well-being of a population within an urban or metropolitan area.**

Urban health systems are designed to address the unique health challenges and opportunities that arise in densely populated urban environments.

# Key components of an Ideal urban health system

- **Healthcare Facilities:** Hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities, may range from primary care centers to specialized hospitals.
- **Primary Care Services:** Accessible and affordable primary care services including services provided by general practitioners (GP), family physicians, and community health centers.
- **Public Health Services:** Public health departments work to promote community health through disease prevention, health education, vaccination programs, and other population-based initiatives.
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** Rapid response and emergency medical services are critical in urban areas where accidents, injuries, and medical emergencies are more likely to occur.

- **Health Insurance and Financing:** Mechanisms for healthcare financing and health insurance are important to ensure that residents have access to necessary medical services without facing financial barriers.
- **Health Information Systems:** Robust information systems and technologies play a role in managing health records, tracking public health trends, and facilitating communication among healthcare providers.
- **Urban Planning and Design:** The physical environment of urban areas, including factors like transportation, housing, and green spaces, can significantly impact the health of residents. Collaborations between health professionals and urban planners are crucial for creating healthy urban environments.

# Urban Health Service Delivery in Bangladesh

- The provision of urban health hence lies within the roles and responsibilities of MOHFW, MOLGRDC and urban local government institutions (city corporations and municipalities).

## **Urban Health services providers:**

- MOHFW through Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) is involved in providing primary, secondary and tertiary curative services and public health interventions.
- Facilities under MOHFW: Urban dispensaries, upazila health complexes, district and general hospitals, school health clinics, chest clinics, maternal and child welfare centers, chest hospitals, infectious diseases hospitals, leprosy hospitals, medical college hospitals, specialized institutes hospitals and specialized hospitals.

# Urban Health Service Delivery in Bangladesh

## **Urban Health services providers:**

- LGD implements Urban Primary Health Care Services Delivery Project through which contracted non-governmental organizations (NGO) are providing services in most of the city corporations and some municipalities.
- Numerous NGOs operate different types of health facilities in urban areas.
- Private sector is fast growing in urban areas and providing all types of curative care – primary, secondary and tertiary.

# Existing challenges in ensuring Urban Health in Bangladesh

- **Population Density:**

- High population density in urban areas can lead to overcrowding, putting pressure on healthcare facilities and services.
- Limited space and resources can contribute to the spread of infectious diseases.

- **Air and Water Pollution:**

- Rapid urbanization often leads to increased air and water pollution, affecting the respiratory and overall health of the population.

- **Traffic Congestion:**

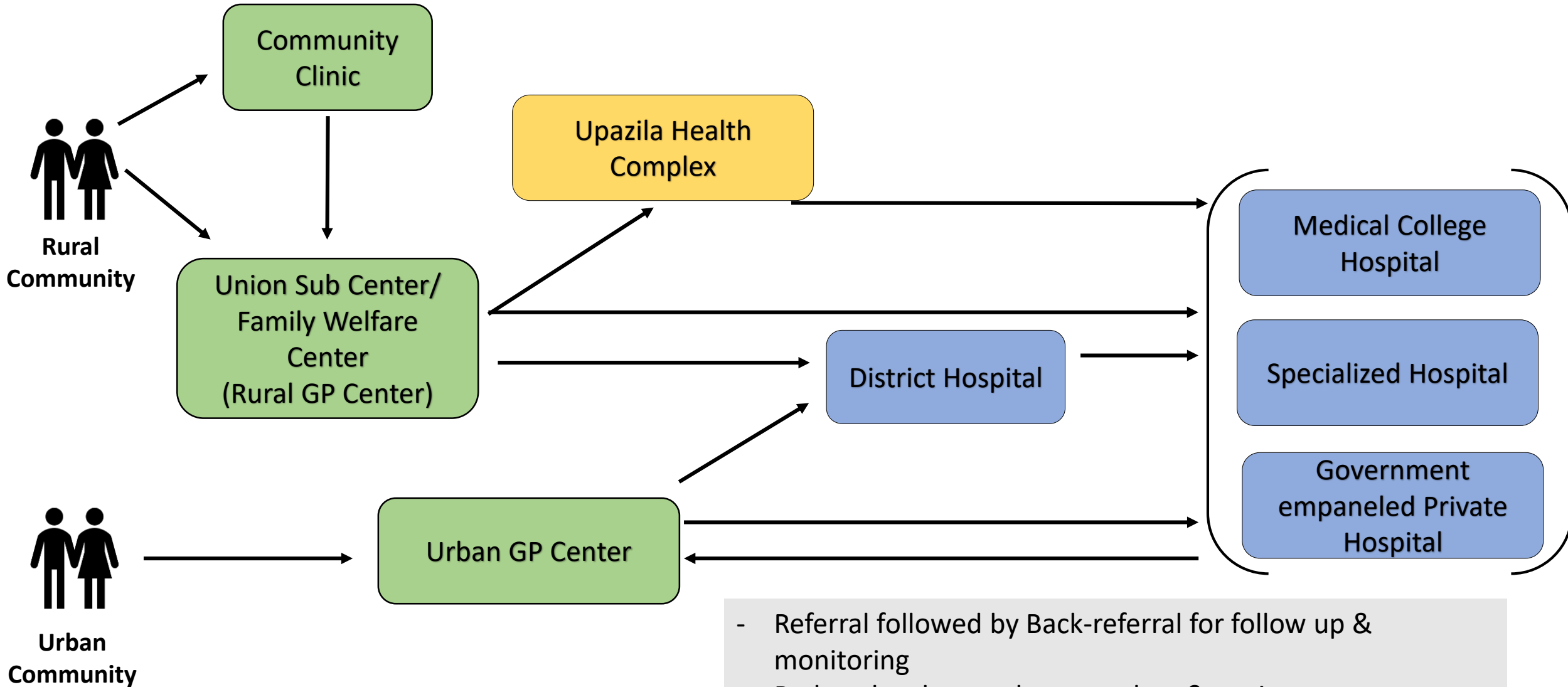
- High levels of traffic congestion in urban areas can lead to increased air pollution and road accidents, impacting public health.
- Limited access for emergency services can hinder timely healthcare delivery.

# Existing challenges in ensuring Urban Health in Bangladesh

- **Limited Access to Healthcare:**
  - Disparities in healthcare access exist, with some urban populations facing barriers to reaching healthcare facilities.
  - Affordability and distance can be challenges for certain segments of the urban population.
- **Infectious Diseases:**
  - The close living quarters and high population density in urban areas create conditions conducive to the rapid spread of infectious diseases.
- **Nutrition and Food Security:**
  - Urban populations may face challenges in accessing nutritious food, contributing to issues such as malnutrition and obesity.
  - Food safety concerns may arise in informal markets and street food vendors.
- **Socio-economic Disparities:**
  - Socio-economic inequalities in urban areas can lead to disparities in health outcomes.
  - Vulnerable populations may face challenges in accessing education and employment opportunities, impacting their overall well-being.



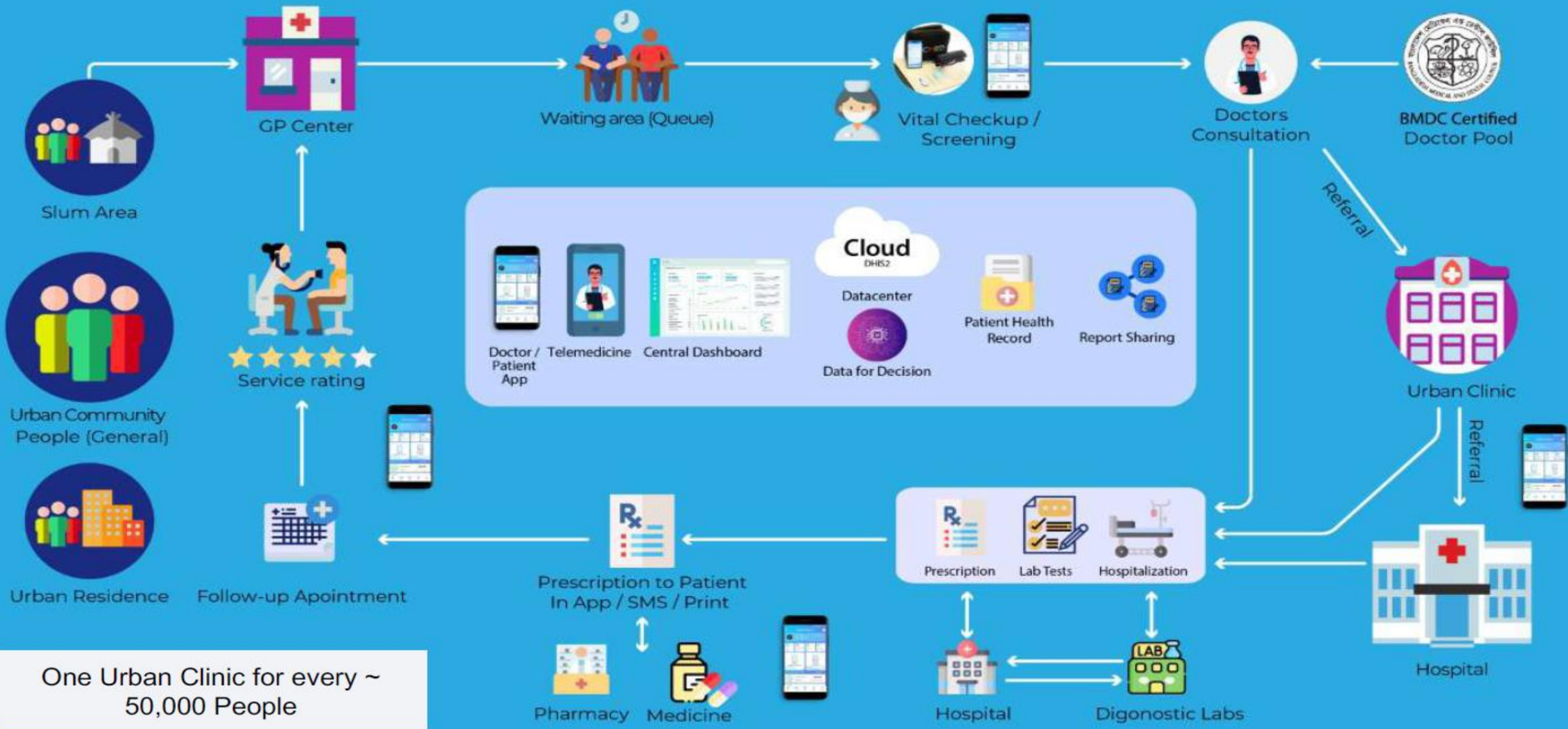
# Integrated Referral System at all level



- Referral followed by Back-referral for follow up & monitoring
- Reduce burden on the secondary & tertiary care

# Urban Clinic Model (Innovative GP Model)

## Integrated Health Information Management System (IHIMS)



# Way Forward:

- Ensuring Primary Healthcare for urban inhabitants and to develop a referral system to ensure emergency, secondary, and tertiary care and coordination.
- Preventive and promotive health programs particularly targeting slum dwellers, floating populations, and marginalized communities to reduce inequity.
- Formation of urban health fund by the government and DPs, and PPP
- Reduce dependency on private sector to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure.
- Establish an integrated and digitalized referral system.

Thank  
you!