

MMB India Newsletter

Illumina

Employee Health & Benefits

Quarterly Edition: January 2026

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- Industry Leader speak
- Industry update and overview
- Decoding the New Labour reforms
- Highlights of MMB India's OPD Conclave 3.0



From MMB Consulting Leaders Desk

Hello Readers,

This year has undoubtedly been a watershed year with groundbreaking initiatives inching closer to the mission of "Insurance for all by 2047". GST waiver on individual health policies w.e.f from 22nd September 2025 was a long awaited move leading to significant increase in premium witnessed in month of November and December specifically within the Standalone Health insurance players.

Another significant move has been the recently passed bill Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025, which allowed 100% FDI in the insurance sector, a landmark move expected to enhance capital flows and competition intensity.

There are various other vital initiatives in pipeline, which are yet to be formalised. One of these being the ongoing discussion of finance ministry with providers on making healthcare more affordable and accessible advising insurers and hospitals to take measures such as devising standardised treatment protocols, seamless cashless processing, common empanelment process etc. Proposal on Internal ombudsman within insurance companies is also currently under examination with the aim to make grievance redressal more efficient

In this edition of newsletter, we will walk you through the recently announced labour codes giving a complete overview of the changes in the labour reforms. The new labour codes redefine areas such as wages, social security, industrial relations, and workplace safety. Forward-looking leaders view these not merely as regulatory requirements, but as opportunities to strengthen organizational culture.

A significant move under the occupational health and safety reform in terms of preventive healthcare has been the health checkup mandate above 40yrs of age group. Preventive healthcare in terms of OPD insurance has been a continuous area of emphasis and importance at MMB. The recently concluded MMB OPD conclave 3.0 has been an emblem to the same and has been resonated by Dr. Noel Coutinho cofounder Ekincare in his article as well covered in this edition of the newsletter.

At MMB, we are dedicated to assisting you in achieving the vision of employee health benefits and wellbeing. Please feel free to reach out to your respective Client Executives for assistance. You may also write directly to

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Ashutosh Jhunjhunwala

Senior Vice President
MMB India Advisory Leader

Industry Leader Speak

An “Always On” Primary Health Care Program A Boardroom Priority

Primary health care – both preventive and OPD – is now a strategic lever for corporate India, not a peripheral perk, because it directly reduces avoidable disease burden, healthcare costs, and productivity loss in the workforce. When delivered through structured, tech-enabled programs, it also improves employee morale, retention, and trust in the employer brand.

India’s new labour codes which have made free annual health check-ups for employees over 40 years of age a statutory obligation, and the growing influence of OPD benefits, and an intelligent use of OPD and claims data, can materially bend the lifestyle-disease curve while improving affordability and long term treatment costs

The scale of India Inc.’s health crisis

Ekincare’s studies show that more than 70% of employees in corporate India have at least one lifestyle-related risk factor such as obesity, hypertension, dyslipidaemias or diabetes, leading to rising chronic disease at younger ages. The tipping point is as low as the 25-30 years of age group where more than 2 and even 3 of these conditions are seen in individuals heightening the risk for CVD and lifestyle diseases. These conditions translate into up to 30 lost working days per employee every year through absenteeism, presenteeism, and mental health related downtime, costing companies as much as ₹1.12 lakh per employee annually (as published in an article in Fortune India – July, 2025)

Why preventive primary care matters

Preventive primary care includes risk assessments, regular diagnostics, vaccinations, lifestyle coaching, and digital nudges that catch disease early or avert it altogether. Evidence from Indian corporate surveys indicates that well designed preventive health programs can reduce health plan costs, sick leave, disability pay, and workers’ compensation by about 25%, while improving on the job productivity by roughly 9% and cutting absenteeism by 2% for every major risk factor reduced.(ref a study published in PubMed Central in April, 2025)

Technology led preventive platforms have averted tens of thousands of disability adjusted life years (DALYs) and generated tens of millions of dollars in annual economic and social value through early detection and interventions among millions of employees. This translates into more healthy days at work, fewer catastrophic claims, and a stronger case for viewing preventive care as an investment in human capital rather than a cost centre. (Ref the ekincare Impact Report 2025)

OPD access as a productivity tool

Outpatient care – consultations, diagnostics, chronic care follow ups, and mental health sessions – is where most health journeys actually happen, yet traditional corporate benefits in India have focused on hospitalization (IPD) alone. Digital first OPD networks and cashless access reduce out of pocket expenses, make it easier for employees and dependents to seek timely care, and lower the financial stress that often worsens health and productivity.

Studies on corporate wellness show that when OPD and primary care are integrated into benefits – teleconsultations, e pharmacy, diagnostics, and mental health support – organizations report higher engagement, 22% gains in productivity, and double digit reductions in per employee medical costs. By enabling continuous care instead of one time annual health camps, OPD benefits support better control of diabetes, hypertension, and mental health conditions, which are major drivers of both presenteeism and high insurance claims.

Economic case for corporate India

Research on preventive healthcare in Indian industry finds that two thirds of high performing firms already treat preventive health as part of corporate governance and productivity strategy, not merely CSR. Employers that systematically invest in risk stratification, screenings, and wellness interventions see measurable returns in lower claims, reduced turnover, and improved competitiveness, with some studies estimating a 3-4x return on wellness investments.

For a typical mid to large corporate, shifting from a hospitalization only model to an integrated primary care and OPD model can flatten premium inflation, avoid costly late stage treatments, and support inclusive benefits for tier 2/3 locations and blue collar workers. In a tight talent

OPD access as a productivity tool

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Dr Noel Coutinho
Cofounder Ekincare

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Economic case for corporate India

Research on preventive healthcare in Indian industry



Decoding the new Labour reforms 2025



In a landmark move, the Government of India is implementing four new Labour Codes (effective from November 21, 2025) to replace 29 existing labour laws, creating a streamlined and uniform regulatory framework. These changes in the labour codes introduce important reforms that affect not only compliance requirements but also has some possible implications on Employee Health & Benefits.

Why Were Labour Codes Introduced?

Earlier: The Challenge

India's labour landscape was governed by over 40 central labour laws enacted across different decades. This created significant complexity:

- Overlapping provisions across multiple statutes
- Inconsistent definitions of basic terms like "wages" and "employee"
- Administrative burden for both employers and enforcement agencies
- Difficulty in compliance due to scattered regulations

Now: The Solution

Four consolidated Labour Codes bring structure and clarity to the regulatory framework:

- Unified definitions across all employment matters
- Streamlined compliance requirements
- Clear categorization of regulations by subject matter
- Reduced administrative complexity for organizations

The Four New Codes

1. Code on Wages, 2019
2. Industrial Relations Code, 2020
3. Code on Social Security, 2020
4. Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions (OSHWC) Code, 2020

Key Features & Worker Benefits

1. Code on Wages

- Uniform definition of wages across sectors.
- Minimum wages become a statutory right for all workers, including in the unorganized sector.
- A national floor wage ensures that no state can fix wages below a basic standard.
- Timely payment of wages and overtime at twice the normal rate.
- Written appointment letter required for all workers.

2. Industrial Relations Code

- Simplifies and modernizes rules on trade unions, disputes, and layoffs.
- Fixed-term employment formally recognized and treated equally to permanent roles (same wages and benefits).
- Threshold for layoffs requiring government approval

- increased (from 100 to 300 employees), giving firms more flexibility (but this has sparked debate).
- Mandatory notice periods for strikes and lockouts.

3. Code on Social Security

- Expands social security coverage to:
- Gig workers
- Platform workers
- Unorganized sector workers
- Fixed-term & contract workers
- Combines pensions, Provident Fund, ESIC, gratuity, and other benefits into one framework.
- Social security contributions and benefits are portable across states.

4. Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions (OSHWC) Code

- Replaces multiple fragmented safety laws with unified workplace safety and welfare standards.
- Sets working hours (8 hrs/day, 48 hrs/week) with structured rest and overtime.
- Free annual health check-ups for workers in some categories.
- Guarantees safe working conditions for all, including night work for women with consent and safeguards and safety protections for migrant workers.

Other Important Changes

Fixed-Term & Contract Workers

- Eligibility for gratuity after just 1 year (instead of 5).
- Equal pay and benefits as permanent employees for similar work.

Women's Employment

- Equal pay for equal work and safer workplace norms.
- Night shift work now permitted for women with safety measures and consent.

Gig & Platform Workers

- First formal legal recognition and inclusion in social security schemes.
- Mandatory contributions from aggregators (e.g., ride-hailing, delivery platforms).

Formalization & Compliance

- Employers must issue appointment letters detailing job terms.

- Unified definitions and digital systems are expected to reduce compliance burden and disputes.

The implementation of these new labour codes marks a significant transformation in India's labour landscape, aiming to create a more resilient and competitive workforce while ensuring better protection and welfare for all workers. The transition to this new framework will require careful adaptation from both employers and employees to ensure its successful implementation and to maximize its benefits for the Indian economy.

Reach out to your MMB SPOC for queries related to New Labour Codes.



Highlights of MMB India's OPD Conclave 3.0 - 'Accelerating the OPD Shift'

Sushant V Mallya

Senior Vice President

OPD Practice Leader, MMB India

Shreya Bagrodia

Exec. Vice president Advisory MMB India



MMB India recently completed multiple roadshows, spanning 6 cities, on how OPD insurance is shifting from reactive to revolutionary – making preventive healthcare into a smarter, personalized and proactive healthcare solution.

Some of the strategic takeaways we shared while accelerating the OPD insurance shift:

The 3 Ps Framework - Integrated data insights into your benefits design process Our strategic approach to OPD insurance is designed to move from reactive claims to proactive care:

- Predict: Use data insights to anticipate health needs early.
- Prevent: Focus on early interventions to reduce illness severity.
- Personalize: Tailor benefits to individual and household health profiles.

Bridging the Coverage Gap - Implement phased coverage limits aligned with real household needs

- The median OPD coverage limit of INR 15K is outdated, based on limited benchmarking and legacy reimbursement models.
- Actual household expenditure for primary care is around INR 42,800 annually for a nuclear family.
- We recommend phased coverage aligned with real needs to ensure meaningful protection.

Cost Containment & Utilization - Review utilization controls to drive cost-effective care

- Incorporate copays, deductibles, and benefit sub-limits to prioritize essential care and avoid open-wallet spending.
- These measures drive effective utilization and cost control.

Integration & Synergy - Explore integrated platforms to maximize data flow for building IPD & OPD synergies

- Fragmented platforms and funding cause data flow breaks and delays.
- The IPD-OPD Synergy Calculator quantifies the value of integrated inpatient and outpatient care, helping optimize benefits and reduce overall costs.

Cashless Care - Prioritize cashless options for enhanced compliance and service

- Cashless OPD services offer broad network access, governance, and cost efficiency.
- Every transaction is audited, ensuring transparency and control.

Changing Insurance Habits

- Insurance buying is often based on past coverage, limiting budgets for new OPD benefits.
- Education and strategic communication are key to shifting this mindset.

For more information or to discuss your OPD strategy, please reach out to your MMB SPOC

Events Highlights

Marsh India recently completed the our six-city primary healthcare conclaves, where we engaged over 600 industry leaders and HR professionals across the country. These sessions brought together senior HR partners, thought leaders, insurers, and health-tech partners. The exchange of ideas was phenomenal, and deep insights were shared and contributed towards working together to elevate workforce health. Together we aim to aid the national goal of Viksit Bharat 2047. Marsh India is committed to accelerating the shift to OPD and making preventive primary care the cornerstone of employee well-being.



Launching soon - Future of Benefits 2026 & beyond

MMB India's flagship annual benefits thought leadership report.

[Download a snapshot](#)

Perspectives from over 700 employers representing 3.5 million+ workforce and 8.5 million+ lives. 82,000 employee voices spread across varied industry, geography and generations. This is benefits intelligence seen through a dual lens at enterprise scale.

Events Upcoming in February - '6 multicity events themed 'Future of Benefits 2026 & beyond' happening across Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Gurgaon, Pune and Hyderabad, where HR Heads, Risk managers and decision makers across corporates will be participating and contributing to the discussions around the trends in the Employee Benefits landscape.

Location	Event Dates
Mumbai	03-Feb-26 (Tuesday)
Gurgaon	06-Feb-26 (Friday)
Hyderabad	13-Feb-26 (Friday)



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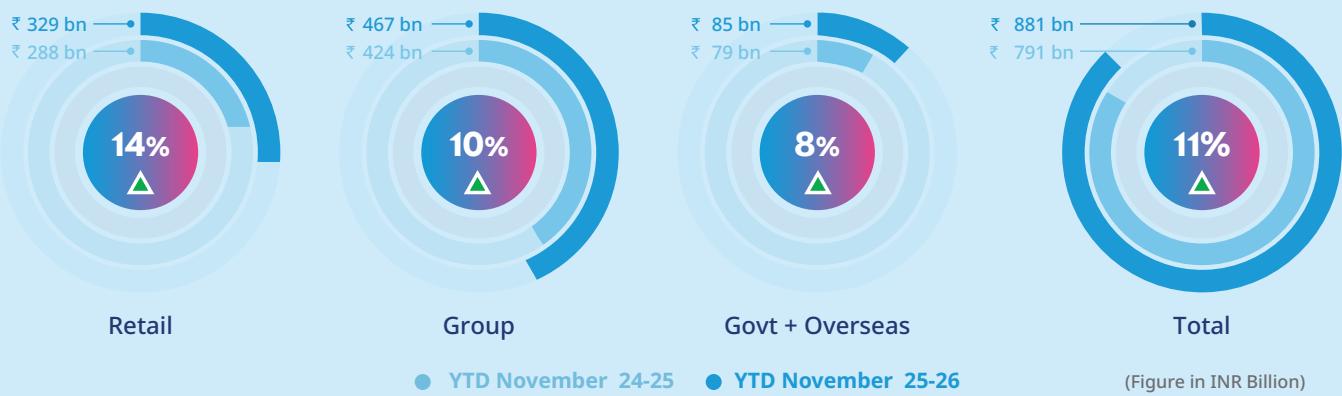
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Industry Statistics

Industry Statistics

Health Insurance Business Distribution



11% YOY growth seen across the health insurance industry as on YTD November compared to 7.7% YOY growth as on YTD September. The increase in growth is owing primarily to retail line of health business primarily on account of the GST cut wef from 22nd September 2025 which significantly fostered growth.

Group Business Distribution

Figure in Bn	YTD November 24-25		YTD November 25-26		
Company	GWP	Market Share	GWP	Market Share	YOY Growth
Public Sector Companies (PSU)	196	46%	212	45%	8%
Private Companies (PVT)	164	39%	183	39%	12%
Stand alone Health Company (SAHI)	64	15%	71	15%	12%
Grand Total	424	100%	467	100%	10%

Nearly constant group health market shares across PSU/PVT and SAHI insurance player over last 2 years.