



## Chapter 7:

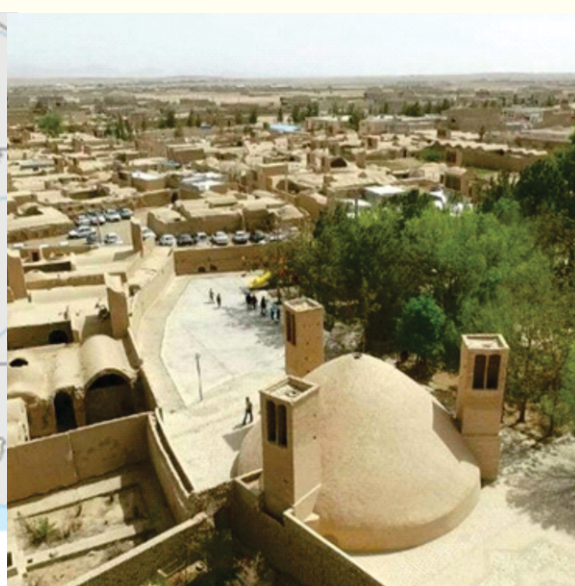
Integration of Persian Medicine Services  
into Health Houses Network  
in Rural Areas





Primary Health Care coverage (PHC) is one of the most important aims of World Health Organization. In Iran, there is a comprehensive network of health houses to supply PHC in all rural areas. These health houses provide essential health care requirements for the people in far and rural areas as the first line of health care and treatment services. There are health workers (Behvarz) with a basic level of knowledge about medical and health issues. They help people there to improve health and access to primary medical services and they are educated to refer sever patients to the next level of medical services, called as Health centers, where there are physicians located.

As the aim of PHC coverage of Persian medicine services by spreading it to health houses in the country, a plan of action to include primary Persian medicine services was founded by office of Persian and complementary medicine with cooperation with deputy of health at ministry of health of Iran. This Persian medicine services contain only health advices, life style modifications, nutritional aspects and simple medicinal herbs. For the first step, this project was done as a pilot study in Ardakan, a city in the center of Iran in Yazd province.



Historical City of Ardakan

It took months to get the preparing documents, teaching contents and organization for starting the pilot project done. Finally, the project was started at September 24, 2020. The minister of health and medical education started the project officially by his online speech. Many other officials from ministry of health and other related organs joined to the opening ceremony of this project. Later, the details of this project were presented and discussed in a meeting hosting by deputy of health at ministry of health and medical education with Dr. Zhang Qi, head of Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Unit at WHO headquarter and some other officials of EMRO and scientific associations in Iran at October 2, 2020.

Dr. Mohammad Reza Alaei, the former dean of school of Persian Medicine in Ardakan (affiliated to Yazd Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences) was appointed as executive director of the project. In this project, Persian Medicine specialists (mostly faculty members of the school of Persian Medicine in Ardakan) trained 17 teachers and they also trained 22 health workers. These health workers are working in 12 health houses in more than 20 villages and rural areas of Ardakan city. The covered people by Persian medicine services in these villages and rural areas are more than 8000 persons. Five research projects are done to evaluate the efficacy of these trainings during this pilot study. According to the satisfactory results of these plans, the integration of Persian medicine services in the network of health houses is carried out as a national project at the country level.



**Announcement of Persian medicine integration into health house services in Sarv-e-Olia village in Ardakan**



**Training courses of Persian medicine services for people in Ardakan villages**

According to the results of the pilot project in Ardakan, the expansion of the first phase of the project of integrating Persian medicine services in the Health Houses network system with the aim of improving the lifestyle and promoting a healthy lifestyle in 15 universities of the country, including Shahid Beheshti, Mashhad, Qom, Isfahan, Tabriz, Yazd, Shiraz, Kerman, Mazandaran, Hamadan, Babol, Golestan, Kashan, Fasa and Sabzevar started on November 23, 2022 and will cover 40% of the country's population by the end of the Solar year (March 2023). So that by the end of 2023, one hundred percent of the population will have received lifestyle education based on the teachings of Persian medicine.

This package of healthy lifestyle teachings in Persian medicine will be taught like a cascade by Persian medicine experts to health trainers and family health experts, in person and to headquarter's experts and physicians in virtual form. These wellness trainers will teach the learned materials to the health care workers, and finally, lifestyle lessons will be taught by the health care workers to the covered population through group and individual trainings. Before and after the training, lifestyle birth certificates will be filled through the country's electronic systems in order to check the effects of the training on their knowledge and attitude and to improve their lifestyle. At this stage of integration, physicians are only overseeing the provision of lifestyle education to people and are not supposed to intervene and provide services. The training and integration of the teachings of Persian medicine in the packages of different age groups and the use of therapeutic methods of Persian medicine will take place in the next phase of integration.



