

Govt to Set Up Cancer Centres in District Hospitals - Key Plans & Benefits

March 18, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in Today's Article?

- Cancer Daycare Centres in District Hospitals Latest News
- Cancer Burden in India
- Key Government Initiatives for Cancer Control
- Advancing Cancer Research and Treatment
- Government's Plan for Cancer Daycare Centres
- Cancer Daycare Centres in District Hospitals FAQs

Cancer Daycare Centres in District Hospitals Latest News

- The Union Health Ministry plans to set up cancer daycare centres in all district hospitals. Each centre will offer chemotherapy, counseling services, and medicines, with four to six beds. Every facility will have an oncologist or trained medical officer, two nurses, a pharmacist, a counsellor, and a multi-purpose worker.

- These details were outlined in a Parliamentary Standing Committee report tabled recently regarding the Ministry's demand for grants.

Cancer Burden in India

- In India, cancer cases are projected to rise significantly, with over 14 lakh new cases recorded in 2023.
- Approximately 100 out of every 1 lakh people in India are diagnosed with cancer annually.
- The National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP) under ICMR has been tracking cancer trends since 1982 to enable evidence-based policymaking.

Union Budget 2025-26: Strengthening Cancer Care

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been allocated Rs. 99,858.56 crore, with Rs. 95,957.87 crore for the Department of Health & Family Welfare and Rs. 3,900.69 crore for Health Research.
- **Day Care Cancer Centres:** 200 centres to be established in district hospitals in 2025-26.
- **Customs Duty Exemptions:** 36 life-saving drugs, including those for cancer, are fully exempted from Basic Customs Duty (BCD); Six additional medicines to attract a concessional 5% duty.
 - Drugs under Patient Assistance Programmes are also fully exempted.

Key Government Initiatives for Cancer Control

- **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer (NPCDCS)**
 - Aims to prevent and control cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and strokes under the National Health Mission (NHM).
- **Strengthening of Tertiary Care for Cancer Scheme**
 - Aims to decentralize cancer treatment and expand access to specialized care.
 - **Key Infrastructure Developments:** 19 State Cancer Institutes (SCIs); 20 Tertiary Care Cancer Centres (TCCCs); National Cancer Institute (NCI), Jhajjar, Haryana; Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute (CNCI) – Second Campus in Kolkata.
- **Ayushman Bharat Yojana (PMJAY)**
 - Launched in 2018 to provide universal health coverage.
 - Covers chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and surgical oncology for economically vulnerable families.
- **Health Minister's Cancer Patient Fund (HMCPF)**
 - Provides financial aid up to ₹5 lakh for cancer treatment to patients below the poverty line.
 - Maximum financial assistance under the scheme is ₹15 lakh.
- **National Cancer Grid (NCG)**
 - Established in 2012 to standardize and improve cancer care across India.
 - Comprises 287 member institutions, including cancer centres, research institutes, and advocacy groups.
 - Treats over 750,000 new cancer patients annually, covering 60% of India's cancer burden.

Advancing Cancer Research and Treatment

- **India's First Indigenous CAR-T Cell Therapy - NexCAR19**
 - Developed in April 2024 by IIT Bombay, Tata Memorial Centre, and ImmunoACT.
 - A breakthrough treatment for blood cancers, reducing dependency on expensive imported therapies.
- **Quad Cancer Moonshot Initiative**
 - Launched in September 2024 in partnership with the US, Australia, and Japan.
 - Focuses on eliminating cervical cancer in the Indo-Pacific region through screening, vaccination, and advanced research.
- **Expansion of ACTREC (Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research, and Education in Cancer)**
 - Began expansion in January 2025 to enhance cancer research, treatment, and patient care.

Government's Plan for Cancer Daycare Centres

- The Union Health Ministry has proposed setting up cancer daycare centres in all district hospitals to bring treatment closer to patients.
- Establishing such facilities in district hospitals will make chemotherapy more accessible and efficient.

Objective and Implementation

- The initiative aims to ensure continuity of cancer treatment, especially in the 764 district hospitals that currently lack such facilities.
- Patients will receive initial treatment plans at tertiary care centres and continue treatment at these daycare centres.
- As per the Union Budget announcement, 200 centres are planned for the current financial year, with the full rollout expected over three years.

Concerns Over Staffing

- While the Government suggested using existing district hospital staff, the Parliamentary panel recommended separate recruitment due to a shortage of healthcare professionals.

Expert Recommendations

- Experts support the initiative but stress the need for additional services:
 - **Pain Management:** Many cancer patients require pain relief, which can be provided at a low cost.
 - **Training for Medical Staff:** Since not all district hospitals have oncologists, doctors and staff must be trained in managing chemotherapy side effects and complications.
 - **Regional Feasibility:** States like those in the Northeast and Kerala, where district hospitals already offer cancer care, may find it easier to implement the initiative.

Cancer Daycare Centres in District Hospitals FAQs

Q1. Why is India setting up cancer daycare centres in district hospitals?

Ans. To provide accessible chemotherapy, counseling, and treatment services for cancer patients at the district level.

Q2. How many cancer daycare centres will be established in India?

Ans. The government plans to set up 200 centres in district hospitals in 2025-26.

Q3. What services will be available at these cancer daycare centres?

Ans. Facilities will offer chemotherapy, counseling, medicines, and pain management with trained oncologists and medical staff.

Q4. How does Ayushman Bharat Yojana support cancer patients?

Ans. It covers chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and surgery for economically vulnerable families under universal health coverage.

Q5. What are the key government initiatives for cancer control in India?

Ans. Programs like NPCDCS, NCG, HMCPPF, and ACTREC focus on cancer prevention, treatment, and financial aid.

Source: IE | PIB | IE

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/govt-to-set-up-cancer-centres-in-district-hospitals/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.