

Pharma leaders demand increase in health budget

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They called for a 3-5-year vision plan, development of R&D and relationship with academia to overcome the challenging time that may continue till December 2021.



Pharma industry leaders at the 'Gratitude Week – A Tribute to Health Guardians' organised by Integrated Health and Wellbeing (IHW) Council have called for an increase in budgetary allocation for health to support India's bid for self-reliance.

"We must realise that India's health security is as important as its defence security. Our healthcare budget is 1/5th of the defence budget – healthcare budget in countries like the US or China is more than their defence budget. I believe science should prevail, so we have not asked for emergency approvals," says Sanjiv Navangul, Managing Director & CEO, Bharat Serums and Vaccines Limited (BSVL).

Last month, the company received approval from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to conduct phase III clinical trials on existing drug ulinastatin for mild-to-moderate acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) patients which is also likely to help COVID-19 patients.

Kamal Narayan, CEO, IHW Council says, "We see doctors as the warrior in this pandemic but the lesser known corona fighters are the critical cogs of the healthcare ecosystem – they are the researchers, pharmaceutical companies, device manufacturers, and diagnostic centres who are working tirelessly so that doctors can serve better. Together, they will ensure that we are on the right path to develop a 'Swasth Bharat, Ayushman Bharat, Atmanirbhar Bharat'. The times are changing fast and we need to bolster our allied healthcare sector to empower our doctors and enable the medical community serve the people better."

Echoing the sentiments of his colleagues in the government and other lawmakers, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ramdas Athawale, said that memorials for healthcare workers who are fighting the COVID19 pandemic at the frontline should be set up in every state capital as well as in the national capital.