

Huge funding boost to strengthen cancer facilities

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The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the scheme for strengthening the tertiary care cancer facilities under the National Program for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, CVDs and Stroke (NPCDCS) at total cost of Rs 4,697 crore with Central Government and State share of Rs 3,535 crore and Rs 1,162 crore respectively.

The proposal seeks to enhance the tertiary care cancer facilities available in the country, address spatial imbalances, reduce waiting period for diagnosis and treatment, provide access to free/affordable facilities for the poor and increase availability of human resources trained for cancer. The proposal is to assist the State / Union Territory Governments in setting up State Cancer Institutes (SCI) and for setting up/strengthening of Tertiary Care Cancer Centres (TCCC).

The scheme will enhance the physical (equipment) capacity. Further, teaching and research facilities for cancer also need to be strengthened in all the States. The implementation of the proposal will help in increasing radio therapy/medical oncology and other cancer related facilities in underserved areas. Bed capacities for in-patient treatment will also increase.

20 State Cancer Institutes (SCI) will be established in 20 States and 50 Tertiary Care Cancer Centres (TCCC) in different parts of the country. Financial assistance of upto Rs 120 crore and Rs 45 crore would be provided for SCI and TCCC respectively, inclusive of Government of India's share of 75 percent and State share of 25 percent (in case of North-East States and Hill States the share will be 90: 10).

In addition to diagnosis and treatment, the assisted institutions will impart training to doctors, nurses, technicians etc. and also mentor the activities pertaining to prevention, early detection, treatment and rehabilitation being undertaken in various

districts under the National Rural Health Mission (now the National Health Mission) component of the programme. Cancer cases detected during screening at the district levels will be treated at the SCI/TCCC.

Recurring costs will be borne by the State Governments/ institution concerned. However, the recurring cost for the central monitoring cell at ministry of health and family welfare (MOHFW) and for the cancer registries component will be borne by the central government.

Cancer has emerged as a major public health challenge in India. It is one of the leading causes of deaths in the country and it is estimated that in India, there are, at any point in time, 28 lakh cases of cancer. New cases every year and annual mortality are estimated to be 11 lakh and 5 lakh respectively.