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Karnataka Government to fix rates for treatment in Private Hospitals

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The Karnataka Government has tabled a bill which empowers the state government to fix rates for different types of treatments and bed charges in private hospitals and nursing homes. If rules are violated, the government will attract a maximum penalty of Rs. 5 lakh.

The reform comes at a time when health care charges in private hospitals continue to rise, especially for speciality treatments, making them unaffordable for people from the lower economic classes.

According to a news source, the bill in its statement of objects and reasons states that if private hospitals collect more charges than fixed by the state government, penalty of not less than Rs 25,000 which may extend up to Rs 5 lakh can be imposed. Imprisonment of not less than six months which may be extended up to three years has also been provided for in the bill, in case of violation.

The state government suggested that on the recommendation of the expert committee to fix the rates of each class of treatment, different rates may be fixed for different class of private hospitals.

Though the fate of the bill remains uncertain at this juncture, new clauses have been inserted to ensure private hospitals do not demand advance payment in case of emergency treatment.

The bill also suggests the setting up of a district of metropolitan grievance redressal committee for redressal of grievance of patients.