

## PM-JAY TO INCLUDE CANCER TREATMENT SOON, SAY HEALTH OFFICIALS

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

If all goes as planned, cancer treatments will soon be covered under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), which is the Central Government's health insurance scheme that aims to give medical cover to over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families of approximately 50 crore beneficiaries, providing coverage of up to 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.

So far, 16,000 hospitals have been empanelled, nearly 34 lakh beneficiaries have been admitted, and 9 crore e-cards have been issued, according to senior health officials.

According to the World Health Organisation, the rate of mortality due to cancer in India is high, with cancer the second-most common disease in India, responsible for maximum mortality, with about 0.3 million deaths per year.

Government figures note that the estimated number of people living with the disease stands at around 2.25 million, with over 11 lakh new cancer patients registered each year.

"In India, the risk of developing cancer before the age of 75 years for males stands at 9.81% and females at 9.42%. Total deaths due to cancer in 2018 was 7,84,821 (Men: 4,13,519; Women: 3,71,302). The risk of dying from cancer before the age of 75 years stood at 7.34% in males and 6.28% in females.

Lung cancer is the most common type of cancer in India, followed by breast cancer and oral cancers.

The need for including cancer treatment into the healthcare package came from the fact that "the government realised that cancer care costs were causing massive financial crisis among people and many had to go without treatment. The Ayushman Bharat Yojana is now planning to include all types of cancers and their treatment under its healthcare packages. Talks are on and we should have a road map within the next three months. The healthcare packages for cancer treatment are not very comprehensive and we feel that improvements can be made," said a senior health official.

"In India, cancer treatment is very expensive and we would like to include treatment for all types of cancer in our health packages, which are cost-effective, proven and beneficial to patients. Patients often undergo multiple therapies for cancer treatment, including chemotherapy, surgery and radiation, which are very expensive. We want that nobody should have to go without treatment for the want of money, which is the rationale behind trying to include all cancer regimes under the programme," he added.

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