

ACCESS TO PALLIATIVE CARE ONLY FOR 1-2% OF THOSE IN NEED: DATA

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

Only 1-2% of the population who need palliative care have access to it in India compared to the global average of 14%, according to Health Ministry data analysis released by the health unit of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).

The analysis shows that while India stands at number three in terms of cancer incidence in the world, most States in the country do not even have enabling legislation or policy to integrate palliative care with treatment offered to cancer patients. Currently only three States (Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra) have a palliative care policy. Kerala, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab, and Assam report the highest overall crude incidence rates of cancers which is greater than 130 cases per lakh population.

As per the report on the state of cancer incidence in the country, the financial burden for cancer treatment is highest among all diseases, making it unaffordable for over 80% of the population.

“The government needs to undertake efforts to include palliative care packages under reimbursement schemes of government as well as private insurance plans,” notes the study.

The Health Ministry in its response had noted that an initiative for prevention, control, and screening for non-communicable diseases has been rolled out under the National Health Mission (NHM).

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