

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5729  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2026**

**REDUCTION OF CANCER DRUG PRICES**

**5729. SHRI RAJMOHAN UNNITHAN:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the recent reduction in prices of selected cancer drugs has significantly improved affordability for patients across States, if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (b) whether public hospitals in Kerala have reported increased access to essential oncology medicines, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure the sustained affordability of life-saving drugs and equitable access to specialised treatment?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND  
FAMILY WELFARE  
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

- (a) The reduction in prices of selected anti-cancer drugs has contributed to improved affordability for patients, as measures such as trade margin rationalisation and price fixation by NPPA have led to reduction of prices of several drugs, thereby lowering out-of-pocket expenditure and increasing access to essential oncology medicines across States. further, reduction in customs duty and GST on certain high-cost cancer drugs has resulted in corresponding decrease in their market prices, enabling more patients to avail treatment, though State-wise quantification of such improvement is not centrally maintained.
- (b) The State Government of Kerala has informed that the procurement of oncology drugs in the public health hospitals in Kerala is through Kerala Medical Services Cooperation and the costly medicines are distributed through Karunya outlets which are the off-shoots of Kerala Medical Services Cooperation. The Karunya outlets are selling the expensive medicines at zero profit scheme. Hence patients can avail expensive medicines at a much lower cost.
- (c) Under National Health Mission (NHM), National Free Drugs Initiative and Free Diagnostic Services ensure essential medicines and diagnostics at public health facilities, reducing out-of-pocket expenses. Anti-cancer drugs are included in the Essential Drugs List at District and Sub-Divisional Hospitals under National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non Communicable Diseases (NP-NCDs).

Various measures have been taken to make cancer drugs affordable and accessible to the masses, including, among others, the following:

(i) NPPA has fixed ceiling prices of 131 scheduled anti-cancer formulations under NLEM. These include 111 formulations whose prices were fixed under the NLEM, 2015. Refixation of the same under NLEM, 2022 has resulted in reduction of around 21% from the ceiling prices fixed under NLEM, 2015, leading to annual savings of around ₹294.34 crore to patients.

(ii) NPPA has fixed retail prices of 31 anti-cancer formulations of applicant manufacturing and marketing companies, under the DPCO, 2013 provisions relating to fixing of retail prices of new drugs.

(iii) In addition, NPPA has put a cap of 30% trade margin on 42 non-scheduled anti-cancer medicines, in public interest, which has resulted in reduction of MRP of 500 brands of these medicines by an average of around 50%. In addition, government has also been regularly rationalizing the duty on anti-cancer drugs to help reduce their prices.

Treatment of major NCDs including Cancer treatment are available under Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan ArogyaYojana (AB PMJAY). This scheme provides for Rs. 5 lakh per family annually for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization in the empanelled public and private hospitals. The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) and Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) Pharmacies improve access to affordable cancer medicines, stents, and implants, reducing out-of-pocket expenses and supporting long-term treatment adherence.

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