



THEME FOR 2017-18



INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Press Release

**Conference on Comprehensive Cancer Care
Let's Start...
| Affordability ~ Access ~ Awareness |**

Kolkata, 19th December, 2017: "Pharma Jan Samadhan (PJS) initiative by Government of India, is providing an effective and speedy grievance redressal system to effectively deal with complaints related to pricing, shortage and non-availability of cancer medicines": Dr. V. Ravichandran, Director, National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers

"Poor accessibility, overburdened healthcare infrastructure and rising gram negative bacterial resistance are some of the serious healthcare problems India is facing today": Dr. Mammen Chandy, Director, Tata Medical Centre, Kolkata

"Right to healthcare should be a constitutional right of India's citizens": Dr. G.S. Bhattacharyya, Consultant Medical Oncologist

During the **Conference on Comprehensive Cancer Care, Let's Start**, organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Kolkata today, **Dr. V. Ravichandran, Director, National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers** informed the audience about various Government initiatives in diagnosis and treatment of cancer. He stated that Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, is constantly working on the promotion and co-ordination of various high end research work and development of healthcare infrastructure in PPP model in the country. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) administers the prices of drugs, identifies shortages and ensures availability of cancer medicines in the country, under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995. Drug Price Control Orders (DPCO) enables the Government to declare a ceiling price for essential and life saving cancer medicines based on market based data, so as to ensure that the medicines are available at a reasonable price to the masses.

Dr. Mammen Chandy, Director, Tata Medical Centre, Kolkata in his address stated that cancer is going to become one of the leading causes of death in India in the coming years. By 2025, he argued, India is expected to have 1.5 million new cancer cases and 1 million deaths from the disease. However, he informed that our per capita health expenditure is one of the lowest in the world. He stressed on the need to increase public spending in both health and education. According to Dr. Chandy, poor accessibility, overburdened healthcare infrastructure and rising gram negative bacterial resistance are some of the serious healthcare problems India is facing today. As a solution, he focused on increasing human resources, infrastructure and improving the moral fabric of the country. We need to redeem the credibility of the healthcare industry in India and regain the trust of the people.

Dr. G.S. Bhattacharyya, Consultant Medical Oncologist, opined that cancer care delivery is in crisis in India. He pointed out to the fact that today 70% of the Indians are left underserved in terms of medical care. India is facing a severe shortage of healthcare professionals and supportive healthcare system infrastructure. According to Dr. Bhattacharyya, in cancer care, the main challenge is implementation of effective healthcare practices. Awareness should be generated about risk factors for cancer, patients should have easy access to medicines for palliative care and cost effective treatments said Dr. Bhattacharyya. He emphasized on developing better insurance plans and good access programmes for delivering cost-effective cancer care access to the economically marginalized population.

Dr. Vikram Raghuvanshi, Chairman, ICC Healthcare Expert Committee and CEO Woodlands Hospital in his welcome address opined that affordability, access and awareness are the three key barriers to the diagnosis and treatment of cancer in India. According to Dr. Raghuvanshi, the problems in cancer care in India are inadequate financial and human resources, lack of awareness, lack of access to quality, affordable care, lack of prevention and early detection programmes, rising cost of drugs and low penetration of medical insurance against cancer. He expressed his concern at the limited public spending on cancer in India, which has remained below US\$10 per person, (while the same is above US\$100 per person in high-income countries). He re-emphasized that India needs to look into local, cost-effective solutions to cancer care at all levels—prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment. Cancer needs to be addressed as a public health priority, for which the Government needs to take new strategies, manpower planning and funding, coupled with a renewed commitment to tackle the catastrophic expenditures faced by the cancer stricken families.

Mr. Prashant Sharma, Member ICC Healthcare Expert Committee and Managing Director, Charnock Hospital offered the formal vote of thanks. He also commented that India needs to learn from the Scandinavian cancer care models and increase its healthcare spending.

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