

Cipla Foundation partners with B.J. Wadia Hospital

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The holistic care facility in Mumbai will cater to children with all life-limiting and life-threatening conditions treated at the hospital



Cipla Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of Cipla Limited (Cipla), has partnered B.J. Wadia Hospital for children in setting up India's first-of-its-kind paediatric palliative care unit. This care unit has been working alongside doctors in the hospital to ensure that the children and their families get physical and emotional comfort.

Close to 100 children and their families at B.J. Wadia hospital are getting access to holistic care to help them cope with serious and chronic illnesses treated at the hospital. Over the next three years, this number is expected to grow nearly twenty times, with close to 2000 children receiving this specialized line of care.

Dr YK Hamied, Chairman Cipla, who set up Cipla Palliative Care Centre in Pune in 1997, one of India's first dedicated palliative care facilities, was present to officially inaugurate the unit at Wadia hospital and congratulate the team on their success.

Cipla Foundation strongly believes that palliative care focuses on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of an illness at any point, yet most patients are referred to it only towards the end. In line with Cipla Foundation's primary approach to palliative care, a multi-disciplinary team comprising doctors, nurses and counsellors are working towards combining palliative care with the treatment. The team draws up a customized comprehensive care plan for the identified children and their families. It includes sessions to explain the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment plan, counselling sessions, diversion strategies, symptom and pain management techniques and bereavement visits, amongst other services. This has helped both patients and physicians to see the benefits of including palliative care as early on as possible to improve the quality of life of children and their families.

An estimated 50% of children with cancer, congenital conditions, acute severe illnesses and chronic disorders require palliative care. However, the number of palliative care facilities for children in India are deficient to meet the growing demand in the country and those that exist focus primarily on cancer. The unit at Wadia hospital is going beyond oncology to include caring for children with all life-limiting and life-threatening conditions treated at the hospital. Of the cases seen so far at the unit, more than 60% are children with conditions other than cancer.

Ms. Rumana Hamied, Managing Trustee, Cipla Foundation, says, “We believe palliative care is responsive care, adapted for the unique need of every patient. When a child is diagnosed with a serious illness, both the child and the family need a care plan that suits them so they can manage the illness with more ease. Our vision is to provide this support system to these children and their families, by integrating palliative care into the treatment, right from the start.”

As part of this effort, Cipla Foundation has been offering technical and training support to staff members functioning in the unit through webinars with Cipla Palliative Care & Training Centre.

Dr. Minnie Bodhanwala, Chief Executive Officer of the Wadia Hospitals said, “BJWHC has always been at the forefront of pediatric care in India and with this new unit we are able to provide comprehensive care plans for palliative and supportive care, this unit will definitely enhance the quality of care for children and their families. We are happy to associate with Cipla Foundation for this initiative and look forward to further strengthen this partnership”.

This initiative makes way for a dialogue with doctors, nurses and all health care professionals to adopt palliative care as a vital component of treatment. It has the potential to transform the overall quality of care provided for children in India. The project also intends to undertake research and share learnings from this initiative with other health care providers to promote the integration of paediatric palliative care early in the diagnosis.