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Experts discuss roadmap for making cancer care affordable & accessible in India

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Plenary session on cancer care was organised at the 17th annual healthcare conference FICCI HEAL 2023



The FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) on the opening day, 26th October, of its 17th annual healthcare conference- FICCI HEAL 2023, delved into the strategies and opportunities that can drive the growth of the healthcare industry in the years to come.

Centred around the theme, ‘Healthcare METAmorphosis’, the event was Supported by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) and NITI Aayog, Government of India (GoI).

A plenary session on ‘Roadmap for Making Cancer Care Affordable and Accessible in India’ was organised on 26th October. It served as the platform for the panellists to share their insights to create a roadmap for making cancer care more affordable, accessible and improve the outcomes for cancer patients across the country.

Chairing the session, Indrani Kaushal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (GoI) said, “Cancer care, being a public good, pure market mechanisms cannot be merely adequate to deliver such a public good. How to fund cancer care for the most vulnerable populations is what we expect today's deliberation to give us some headway.”

She stressed on the need to involve all the stakeholders to deliver the “public good” and not only look towards the government to make it available in the desired quantity.

Describing cancer as a “pandemic”, Vineet Gupta, Co-Lead, FICCI Task Force Cancer Care and Head - Government Affairs, Siemens Healthineers asserted that technology can play a crucial role in providing comprehensive cancer care throughout the country by networking and improving the infrastructure and resource models, such as Hubble, to ensure optimal utilisation of available services.

Moderator of the Session, Srimayee Chakraborty, Partner, Healthcare Services, EY Parthenon, shared that the escalating cancer crisis in India is evident with nearly 2 million cases diagnosed annually and 9% expected growth in new cases over the coming years.

Adding some data to this discussion, Shobha Mishra Ghosh, Director & Head, government Affairs & Policy, India & South Asia, GE Healthcare said, "There are only 2700 mammograms installed in our country which is just 5% when compared to the US. When we look at cancer care centres deploying high end technologies, it is only 30%, and 15-20% of the cancer patients undergo any kind of radiation therapy, as compared to the global figure of 60-65%. So, the challenge is not just about capital expenditure but also operational of running a cance care centre."