



Parliamentary Panel Proposes Price Cap on Cancer Therapies



Location

New Delhi, India – Recommendation by a parliamentary standing committee.



What's New

- A parliamentary committee has recommended price caps on more categories of cancer medicines.
- The current 30% trade margin cap applies to 42 essential anti-cancer drugs.
- The panel now wants this to be extended to:
 - Cancer vaccines
 - Immunotherapies (like monoclonal antibodies & checkpoint inhibitors)
 - Oral chemotherapy agents



Why This Matters

- Cancer treatment costs in India remain prohibitively high for many patients.
- New therapies, especially immunotherapy and targeted medicines, often cost lakhs per cycle.
- High out-of-pocket expenses push families into catastrophic health expenditure.
- A price cap could make life-saving drugs more affordable and accessible.



India's Cancer Burden

- Around 1.5 million new cancer cases annually.
- Estimated 800,000 deaths every year.

- Breast, cervical, oral, and lung cancers make up the majority.
- Treatment costs can exceed ₹10–20 lakhs per patient for advanced therapies.

Quality Control Concerns

- The committee also flagged trust issues with generic cancer medicines.
- It emphasized the need for:
 - Stricter quality monitoring
 - Better bioequivalence testing
 - Transparency in approvals to boost physician and patient confidence

Who Benefits

- Patients: Direct reduction in drug bills.
- Public hospitals: Savings on procurement.
- Health insurance schemes (Ayushman Bharat, state schemes): Reduced payout burden.

Policy & Next Steps

- The recommendation will now be examined by the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers (which oversees NPPA – National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority).
- If approved, NPPA may issue notifications expanding the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) coverage.
- The move aligns with the government’s push for “Affordable Healthcare for All”.

Expert Views

- **Oncologists:** Supportive, but caution that innovation costs must be balanced.
- **Pharma Industry:** Likely to resist, citing R&D recovery.
- **Patient Groups:** Strongly in favor, calling it a “step towards equity in cancer care”.