

Drugs for cancer, cardiovascular diseases set to get cheaper

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THE INDIAN government will launch a programme to provide drugs for cancer and cardiovascular diseases at affordable rates, Health Minister JP Nadda is slated to announce Sunday.

Under the scheme, drugs will be sold at a fraction of the market price. Docetaxel 120mg, used for chemotherapy cycle, will be priced at Rs 888.75 (93 per cent rebate for one cycle), while the MRP of the injection is Rs 13,440. Similarly, Carboplatin 450 mg would be sold at Rs 1,316.25 while its MRP is Rs 2,561.57.

The first retail facility to sell these discounted drugs will be opened at AIIMS

and will be called the AMRIT (Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment) Retail Pharmacy. It will be run by HLL Lifecare.

"To begin with, HLL will dispense 195 oncology drugs, 186 cardiovascular drugs and 148 cardiac implants through AMRIT pharmacy," HLL chairman and managing director Dr M Ayyappan said. "Initially, the pharmacy will retail cancer drugs. By this month-end, it will commence the dispensing of cardiovascular drugs and implants in line with cancer drugs."

Based on the outcome of the AIIMS outlet, this initiative will be taken to other central government hospitals and Regional Cancer Centres, he added.

An estimated 700,000 Indians are diagnosed with cancer every year.

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