

Press Release

Sikkim to be Developed as Model State in Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

Cancer cases in Sikkim have been rising at an alarming rate. The Government of Sikkim is committed to supporting every citizen in the fight against cancer. Over the past few months, following the priority and guidance of Shri Prem Singh Tamang (Golay), Hon'ble Chief Minister, to emphasize cancer care in Sikkim, the Department of Science and Technology and the Health and Family Welfare Department have been collaborating closely. Cancer data from Sikkim over the last decade was thoroughly analyzed, revealing unique patterns related to cancer incidence, type, ethnicity, and spatial distribution specific to the state. This analysis was presented with the Department of Health Research and the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, along with a request to implement state-specific interventions for cancer care in Sikkim.

Following this, based on a request from the State Government, the Department of Health Research, Government of India, organised an expert consultation titled "Expert Consultation on Cancer Prevention and Control in Sikkim," at the India International Centre, New Delhi on 28th July, 2025. The consultation was chaired by Dr. Rajiv Bahl, Secretary of the Department of Health Research and DG of ICMR. The consultation was attended by leading cancer experts from across the country, representing the ICMR, AIIMS, Tata Memorial Hospital, NICPR, NCDIR, other institutions, senior officials from the Department of Biotechnology, GoI, along with officials from the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Sikkim.

During this event, it was collectively decided to develop Sikkim as a model state for cancer prevention and early detection. It was also agreed to prioritise four cancers with high incidence in the state, namely stomach, oesophageal, breast, and cervical. Based on detailed deliberation, three priority areas were identified:

- **Innovative Research on Localised Cancer Pathways:** Action research on diagnostics, genomics, gut microbiota, metabolomics, and ethnographic studies to decode the unique cancer landscape in Sikkim.
- **Statewide Cancer Awareness and Behaviour Change Campaign:** Launch of a comprehensive education campaign to address key risk factors such as diet, alcohol, tobacco, etc. and promote cancer literacy.
- **Early Detection through Population-Based Screening:** Implementation of proactive, community-level screening programmes targeting high-incidence cancers to detect and treat them early.

Recognising Sikkim's impressive record in public health innovation and service delivery, it was decided that Sikkim is ideally positioned to be developed as a model state in the country for cancer prevention and detection. To implement this strategic plan, three subgroups comprising national and state-level experts are being formed to co-develop a comprehensive proposal within a month, which will be funded through a centre-state partnership mode. This is not just a health initiative. It is a commitment to save lives, build resilient communities, and make Sikkim a beacon of hope in the fight against cancer.



