

Medica Cancer Hospital, Rangapani to organize 'community-based Cancer Screening free camps'

First camp in Darjeeling on Nov 7

HM Report

Siliguri, Nov 5: The Medica Cancer Hospital, Rangapani (formerly known as North Bengal Oncology Centre), organized a media interaction meet today at a private hotel in Siliguri. Announcing the centre's 'community-based Cancer Screening free camps' to be held across North Bengal as a part of the unit's social responsibility initiative, Soma Ghosh, the centre's General Manager informed that the first camp will be held in Darjeeling on November 7. The hospital will be conducting 8 camps a month at different places across North Bengal and people can walk into the camp where specialist doctors will screen those deemed to be found in need of it. Speaking to reporters, Dr.

Pankaj Chowdhary, Medical Director and Chief Oncologist said that there is a need to bring down the taboo that is prevalent with Cancer. People immediately associate "pain and death" with cancer which in fact is a wrong notion, he added. "It is the lack of awareness among people about cancer screening.

There is no symptom for 1st stage cancer. Screening is a procedure where few simple tests are done on a normal person to figure out if there exists any future threat or possibility of cancer and preventive treatment is initiated accordingly. Common cancers such as those of cervical and breast as well as head and neck cancers are screen-able and curable with early detection," said Dr. Chowdhary. He further suggested that after crossing the threshold of 40 years of

age, every person should make it a practice of undergoing cancer screening once annually and in case of women, those above 35 years should have their mammography done routinely, every year. The cost of getting the mammography and CT scan at the Rangapani centre has been kept very minimal at Rs.200 and 500 respectively-comparatively cheaper to any other test labs in NB. Dr. Chowdhary also made startling revelations about the increase of cancer patients stating that the Rangapani unit registers around 2000 new additional cases of throat and neck cancer annually-all due to the use of tobacco, be that in the form of chewing tobacco, gutkha or smoking. There has been almost 25% increase of such cancer cases in last few years in North Bengal.

As far as lung cancer is concerned, the lack of proper implementation of banning smoking in public places in West Bengal and high rate of smokers in Sikkim has made the two border sharing states stand on the threshold of being crowned the leading states in India with maximum number of patients effected with lung cancer, added Dr. Chowdhury. Dr. Salil Dutta, a senior doctor also present at the meet appealed the media to play a pro-active role in making people aware of cancer screening and the existence of the Medical Cancer Hospital in Rangapani so that people don't waste their time going to other big cities for treatment which he said only adds up to the loss of vital time thus resulting in getting their cancer reach advanced stages.