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Title: Need to set up a multi-super speciality hospital for treatment of cancer in Gurdaspur, Punjab.

SHRI PRATAP SINGH BAJWA (GURDASPUR): Highly conservative figures of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have pointed out that there are around 28 lakh cancer patients in India at any given point of time. As per the Indian Council of Medical Research, these are in excess of 9.8 lakh new cases recorded every year. Being the third biggest cause of death in the developing world, Cancer is a scourge causing increasing number of deaths in India. With an average of 30.54 cancer patients per lakh population, the situation in Punjab is quite dismal in this regard.

Reports suggest that as the groundwater is a cancer cocktail with the presence of pesticides such as DDT, BHC (Benzene Hexa-chloride), Uranium and Heavy Metals in abundance. The innocent people who are using this water for want of alternate sources are becoming victims of this great menace and the incidence is reaching such alarming proportions that large area within the state is being termed as the Cancer Belt.

Cancer detection and treatment has been lax so far. The ICMR and the National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research have maintained that cancer cases are not being reported in the state. With a high number of cancer patients, the health setup in the state cannot cope. Cancer patients are being forced to seek medical aid from other states.

There are a handful of cancer hospitals in the State. Cancer treatment is still a distant dream and a harsh reality for the poor. There is an urgent and imminent need to provide for multi super speciality hospitals with special diagnostic and treatment facilities for cancer in various parts of the state including the northern areas, such as my parliamentary constituency of Gurdaspur.

Immediate steps must be taken to ascertain the number of persons suffering from cancer within a time bound manner. Cancer needs to be made a notifiable disease so that hospitals would be required to mandatorily report each cancer case and treat it. Efforts must be taken to provide free care to such patients through a well structured fund dispersing mechanism. I request the Hon. Health Minister to examine the matter and provide a ray of hope to the people by establishing such a multi super speciality hospital preferably in Gurdaspur.