Union Health Secretary Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava launches NCG VISHWAS at National Cancer Grid Annual Meeting 2026, stresses linking of screening records with Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) for continuity of cancer care

Smt. Srivastava emphasises leveraging India's digital health infrastructure for interoperable health records, responsible data sharing and evidence-based healthcare delivery

37.1 crore screenings for oral cancer, 17.4 crore for breast cancer and 9.7 crore for cervical cancer under national programmes: Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava

Around 99 crore ABHA IDs created and about 100 crore health records linked under Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

NCG VISHWAS can support cancer awareness through Ayushman Arogya Shivirs, ASHA and Anganwadi workers: Smt. Srivastava

Smt. Srivastava states intersectoral collaboration essential for early detection and affordable cancer care

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Union Health Secretary Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava today launched NCG VISHWAS, a patient education initiative of the National Cancer Grid (NCG), at the NCG Annual Meeting 2026 in Mumbai. Addressing the sessions on 'Key Considerations in the Development and Adoption of Technology and AI' and 'National Intersectoral Collaboration for Cancer Control', she highlighted the importance of leveraging India's digital health infrastructure

and intersectoral collaboration to strengthen cancer awareness, screening and continuity of care. She reiterated the Health Ministry's commitment, guided by the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision, to ensure accessible, affordable and top-quality healthcare for all.

NCG VISHWAS (Videos to Support Health, Wellness, Awareness and Self-care) is an AI-enabled patient education initiative covering breast, cervical and oral cancers in Hindi, Marathi, Tamil and English. The videos cover prevention, diagnosis, treatment and long-term care, helping patients and caregivers access reliable information and make informed decisions. The initiative will be disseminated through the National Cancer Grid's network of hospitals and healthcare partners.



Highlighting the scale of screening under national health programmes, Smt. Srivastava said that individuals above the age of 30 are being screened for common non-communicable diseases, including oral, breast and cervical cancers, at the 1.87 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs across the country. Over 153 crore screenings have been undertaken so far, including 37.1 crore for oral cancer, 17.4 crore for breast cancer and 9.7 crore for cervical cancer.

She also emphasised the role of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) in linking screening data with the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) ID. With around 99 crore ABHA IDs created and about 100 crore health records linked, the ABHA ID enables continuity of care as patients move across primary, secondary and tertiary facilities, including the empanelled hospitals under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) and supports the creation of a longitudinal health record. She noted that, with the patient's consent, health records should be accessible to healthcare providers at different levels of care.

On awareness generation, Smt. Srivastava highlighted the Swasth Nari Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan, which ran in September last year and saw 11 crore footfalls, and said that awareness efforts are being sustained through monthly Ayushman Arogya Shivirs in the States. She said NCG VISHWAS videos can further strengthen these efforts by reaching patients directly.

The Union Health Secretary also highlighted the importance of affordability in cancer treatment, referring to initiatives such as trade margin rationalisation for cancer medicines and financial support under AB PM-JAY for vulnerable and marginalised patients. She noted that approximately ₹27,000 crore has been provided towards cancer care under the scheme.

Smt. Srivastava emphasised the importance of all AIIMS institutions with oncology facilities being part of the National Cancer Grid and encouraged those not yet members to join. She also suggested that NCG member hospitals partner with the Pan-AIIMS Research Consortium, set up with ICMR support, so that data, with patients' consent, can be used to advance cancer care and research.

Smt. Srivastava discussed the National Health Mission's continuum of care from primary to tertiary levels and the expansion of comprehensive primary healthcare services in 2018 from six to twelve packages, incorporating screening for oral, breast and cervical cancers. Screening and follow-up are recorded on the national programme portal, with diagnosis largely confirmed at district hospitals and treatment provided through medical colleges and AB PM-JAY. She also highlighted the provision for Day Care Cancer Centres at district hospitals, technology-enabled radiology services to address workforce gaps and strengthening oncology facilities at the 22 new AIIMS. Calling screening critical to early detection, she urged stakeholders to work together to strengthen cancer screening and ensure affordable healthcare.

Speaking about NCG VISHWAS, Smt. Srivastava expressed appreciation for the initiative and highlighted its relevance to the country's cancer awareness and care efforts. She underscored the potential of the videos to be disseminated through healthcare workers and community platforms, including ASHA workers and Anganwadi workers, to reach patients and families.

She said the videos could also be made available through platforms such as the ABDM and Swasth Bharat portals, enabling greater access to reliable cancer-related information. She called for greater collaboration among policymakers, healthcare institutions, researchers, technology developers and patient organisations to build an integrated, equitable and people-centred cancer-care system, in line with the vision of 'Swasth Bharat, Viksit Bharat'.

Dr. C. S. Pramesh, Convener, National Cancer Grid, said the initiative combines the Grid's clinical expertise with the potential of technology and AI to make reliable, clinician-reviewed information available to patients and families in languages they understand. "Our aim is to empower patients and caregivers with accurate, easy-to-understand information at every stage of their cancer journey," he said.

Dr. Sharmila Pimple, Professor and Head of Preventive Oncology, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, described VISHWAS as "a trusted education video companion" that should be integrated "across the entire cancer care continuum from prevention to palliation".

The NCG Annual Meeting 2026 is being held over two days in Mumbai, bringing together more than 300 cancer centre leaders, policymakers, global cancer control organisations, patient groups, technology developers and industry leaders to deliberate on patient-centred healthcare systems, quality of cancer care, technology adoption and strengthening cancer control through collaboration.

The National Cancer Grid is a network of more than 400 cancer centres, research institutions and patient groups working towards improving cancer care through standardised protocols, quality assurance, capacity building and collaborative research.

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HFW/ Union Health Secretary at NCG Annual Meeting/21 November 2026/2

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