ICCI
Indian Childhood Cancer Initiative

Indian Childhood Cancer Initiative (ICCI)

Newsletter 2026, Issue 4

We are excited to share quarterly updates of Indian Childhood Cancer Initiative

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ICCI Strategic Plan 2026–2030

The Indian Childhood Cancer Initiative (ICCI) has outlined its Strategic Plan for 2026–2030, setting a clear direction for collective action to strengthen childhood cancer care across India.

Vision

Ensure that every child with cancer in India has the best opportunity to survive and thrive regardless of location and means.

Mission

Transforming childhood cancer care in India through stakeholder engagement, knowledge sharing, systemic health strengthening and collaborative policy action.

Four Strategic Goals for 2026–2030

1. Serve as the national platform for shared knowledge and collective action for all individual and organizational stakeholders in childhood cancer in India
2. Through government engagement, support the development and implementation of a National Childhood Cancer Plan which is aligned with the WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer & the CureAll framework
3. Through evidence generation, standardized care pathways, workforce capacity building, and strategic policy advocacy, strengthen childhood cancer service delivery
4. Evaluate and monitor progress in improving the outcomes of children with cancer in India

Looking Ahead

The ICCI Strategic Plan 2026–2030 provides a shared framework for advancing childhood cancer care through knowledge, government engagement, evidence generation, strengthened service delivery and systematic monitoring. It reinforces ICCI's role in bringing stakeholders together to translate collective expertise and action into meaningful improvements for children with cancer across India.

First Technical Expert Group Meeting

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Strengthening the National Approach to Childhood Cancer



First meeting of the **Technical Expert Group (TEG) on Childhood Cancer** under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD) was held on **12 August 2026,** chaired by **Dr. Pushpa Lata, Additional DGHS, MoHFW.**

The meeting brought together representatives from the Government of India, leading paediatric oncology centres, WHO India, ICMR, NHSRC India, nursing and civil society to discuss a coordinated national approach to childhood cancer.
Key discussions covered a national action framework, early recognition and referral, service mapping, access to treatment and financial protection, workforce development, and stronger data and monitoring systems. The meeting opened with welcome remarks by **Dr. L. Swasticharan, DDG & Director EMR.**

Attendees included Dr. Rachna Seth, Dr. Sameer Bakhshi, Dr. Prashant Mathur, Dr. Manas Kalra, Dr. Girish Chinnaswamy, Dr. Kaushal Kalra, Dr. Revathi Raj, Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Dixit, Dr. Rajesh Mehta, Dr. Abhishek Kumar, Dr. Venkatraman Radhakrishnan, Dr. Ramandeep Arora, Ms. Sindhu S Nair, Ms. Poonam Bagai, Dr. Tushar Nanasaheb Nale, Dr. Yannick Puthussery, Dr. Athira Satisan, Dr. Shefali Sharma and Dr. Susmita Dora.

The meeting marks an important step towards an **evidence-informed, coordinated national approach to childhood cancer care in India.**

Sharing India's Work on Childhood Cancer Globally



ICCI had a strong presence at the SIOP 2026 Annual Congress in San Antonio, Texas, with 2 oral presentations and 7 poster presentations showcasing collaborative work across health economics, national planning, early diagnosis, treatment access, nutrition, research and survivorship.

These highlighted ICCI's efforts to generate India-specific evidence, develop practical approaches for strengthening childhood cancer services, and support national policy and planning.

Oral Presentations

Standardizing Nutritional Care in Pediatric Oncology in India Through a Multistakeholder Initiative

Presented by Dr. Maya Prasad, the work focused on developing India-specific, consensus-based recommendations for nutritional care in pediatric oncology. The presentation highlighted the high burden of undernutrition among children with cancer in India, with 40–60% of children estimated to be undernourished at diagnosis. A multidisciplinary group developed recommendations through literature review, expert consultation and consensus discussions, covering eight thematic areas of nutritional care.

Cost-Effectiveness of Pediatric Cancer Treatment in India's Public and Charitable Hospitals: A Multicentre Analysis Using CC-BRIDGE

Using data from 24 government and charitable hospitals and 5,279 newly diagnosed children, this study generated India-specific evidence on treatment costs, centre-level costs, national budget requirements and five-year scale-up scenarios. The study estimated an average treatment cost of ₹6.88 lakh per patient across participating centres and also assessed the cost-effectiveness of pediatric cancer treatment.



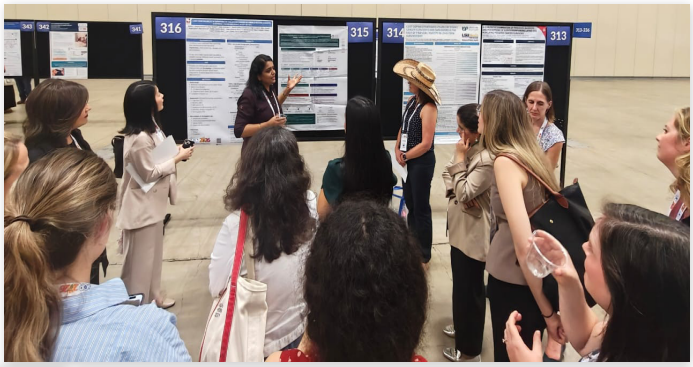
Poster Presentations

- ICCI's posters covered a wide range of priorities:
  Strategic Action Roadmap for a National Childhood Cancer Plan in India — identifying 20 strategic actions across programme planning, implementation, and monitoring.
- Targeted Training for Community Medical Officers for Early Diagnosis of Childhood Cancer — developing and field-testing an Early Recognition Manual and training approach for primary healthcare providers.
- Annual Operating Costs of Paediatric Oncology Centres in India — generating evidence on the costs of operating pediatric oncology centres across India.

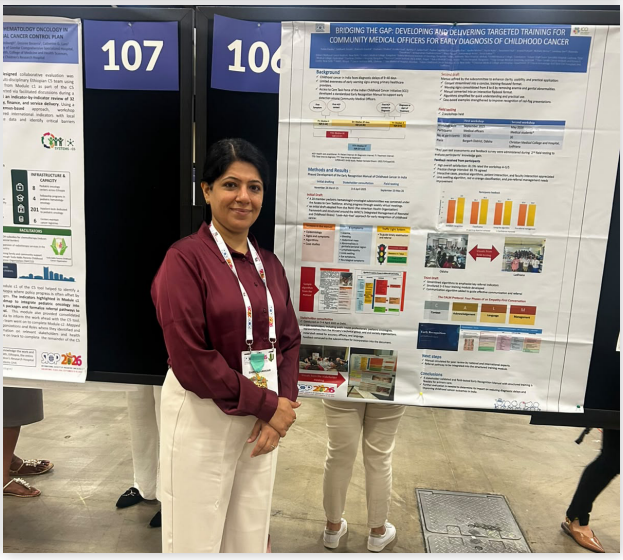
Stakeholder Engagement in States

- Estimating Chemotherapy Requirements and Costs for Childhood Cancer Treatment — analysing chemotherapy requirements across 24 government and trust hospitals, using real-world data and the ChemoGlobe forecasting model.
- Top 10 Priorities for Research in Childhood Cancer in India — identifying nationally relevant research priorities through a multi-stakeholder process involving healthcare providers, parents, survivors and civil society.
- Adapted Guidelines for Childhood Lymphoma Survivors — developing India-specific long-term follow-up recommendations through a Delphi consensus process involving 49 experts.
- Recognising and Addressing Fertility Issues Among Childhood Cancer Patients and Survivors in India — identifying priorities across fertility preservation, clinical care, access, education, policy and research.

Across these presentations, ICCI's SIOP participation demonstrated a broad focus on generating evidence, strengthening health systems and developing context-appropriate approaches to improve childhood cancer care in India.







Empowering Nurses in Pediatric Palliative Care

Basics of Pediatric Palliative Care for Practicing Pediatric Oncology Nurses

ICCI launched the 8-week virtual certificate course, "Basics of Pediatric Palliative Care for Practicing Pediatric Oncology Nurses," on 15 September 2026.

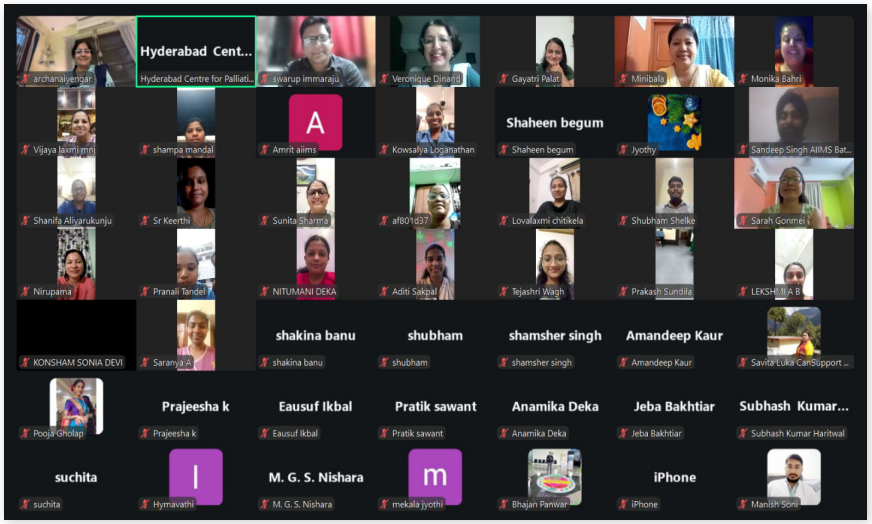
Designed as a nurse-led learning initiative—teaching pediatric palliative care by nurses, for nurses, the course aims to strengthen the knowledge and confidence of pediatric oncology nurses in providing holistic palliative care to children and their families.

The course is being conducted through the Palliative Care Task Force and Nursing Care Task Force of ICCI, in collaboration with the IAP-PHO Chapter, with weekly interactive virtual sessions.

Building Practical Skills

The curriculum covers:

- Assessment and management of symptoms such as dyspnoea, constipation and delirium, along with wound management.
- End-of-life care for dying children.
- Introduction to pediatric palliative care and the concept of total pain.
- Management of procedural pain.
- Pain assessment and management in children, including the WHO analgesic ladder and opioids.
- Serious illness communication with children and their families.

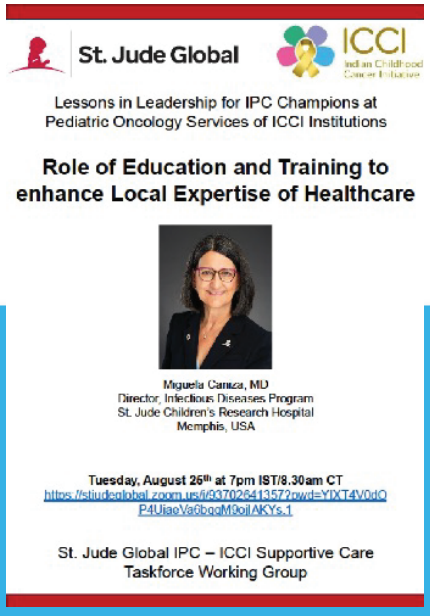


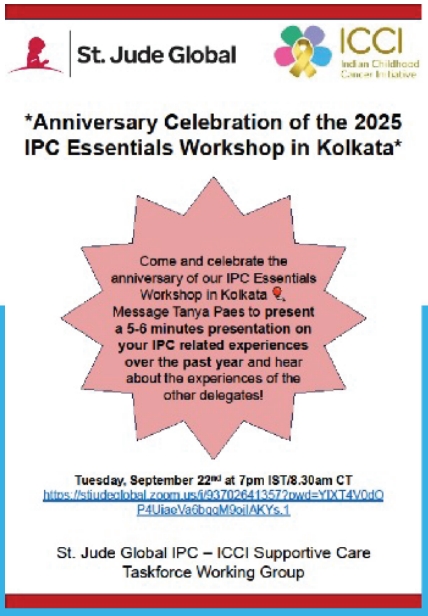
The course has received strong participation, with 67 nurses registered & actively participating.

The initiative marks an important step towards strengthening nurses' capacity to recognise and respond to the palliative care needs of children with cancer and their families.

Strengthening Infection Prevention and Control in Pediatric Oncology

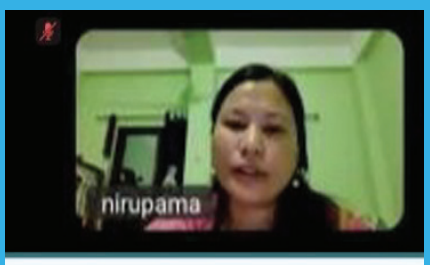






The Supportive Care Taskforce continues to advance Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) through capacity-building initiatives and expert-led discussions.

Dr. Miguela Caniza and Dr. Arpita Bhattacharyya conducted sessions on IPC Essentials for Frontline Healthcare Workers in Pediatric Oncology Services, while Dr. Miguela Caniza also led a session on the role of education and capacity building in strengthening local expertise in healthcare associated infection prevention and control.





The first anniversary of the IPC workshop held in Kolkata from 11–13 September 2025 was commemorated virtually on 22 September 2026. Delegates shared updates, experiences and learnings from the workshop, including the application of hand hygiene and IPC practices at their respective centres.

Developing India-Specific Survivorship Guidelines

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A collaborative Delphi initiative is underway to develop adapted long-term follow-up guidelines for childhood cancer survivors in India. The guidelines address survivors with various treatment exposures and disease groups. The Taskforce continues virtual consultations, consensus discussions on intermediate-risk areas, and subsequent Delphi rounds to support the development of evidence-based, contextually adapted survivorship guidelines for India.

Current progress is as follows:

	EVIDENCE	EXPERTS	DELPHI	FGD
Any Cancer + Leukemia	Done	Done	Done	Done
Lymphomas	Done	Done	Done	Done
CNS Tumours & Retinoblastoma	Done	Done	Ongoing	
Abdominal Tumours	Done	Ongoing		
Sarcomas	Done	Ongoing		

Fertility Preservation Position Statement

A multistakeholder position statement titled “Recognizing and Addressing Fertility Issues among Childhood Cancer Patients and Survivors in India: A Multistakeholder Position Statement and Call to Action” was published in the Indian Journal of Medical and Paediatric Oncology, contributing to national advocacy and policy dialogue on fertility preservation.



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Policy Brief

Recognizing and Addressing Fertility Issues among Childhood Cancer Patients and Survivors in India – A Multi Stakeholder Position Statement and Call to Action

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Abstract

Survival rates in childhood and adolescent cancers have improved substantially over the past decades, leading to a growing population of long-term survivors. In India, an estimated 76,000 children and adolescents are diagnosed with cancer annually, and approximately one-quarter receive treatments associated with a high risk of gonadal toxicity. Fertility impairment is therefore an increasingly important survivorship issue. Despite international recommendations advocating fertility counselling and preservation prior to treatment, access to such services in India remains limited. Barriers include low awareness among healthcare providers and families, limited availability of assisted reproductive technology (ART) services in the public sector, high costs, sociocultural factors, and regulatory uncertainties under the Assisted Reproductive Technology Act, 2021. Fertility preservation options are also constrained for prepubertal patients, for whom experimental approaches such as gonadal tissue cryopreservation are not widely available. This viewpoint summarizes the burden of fertility impairment among childhood cancer survivors in India, reviews current standards of care, and highlights key gaps in access and policy. We propose a multi-stakeholder call to action involving

Keywords
- childhood cancer
- fertility preservation
- India
- oncofertility
- position statement

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SIGPPO India Learning Series

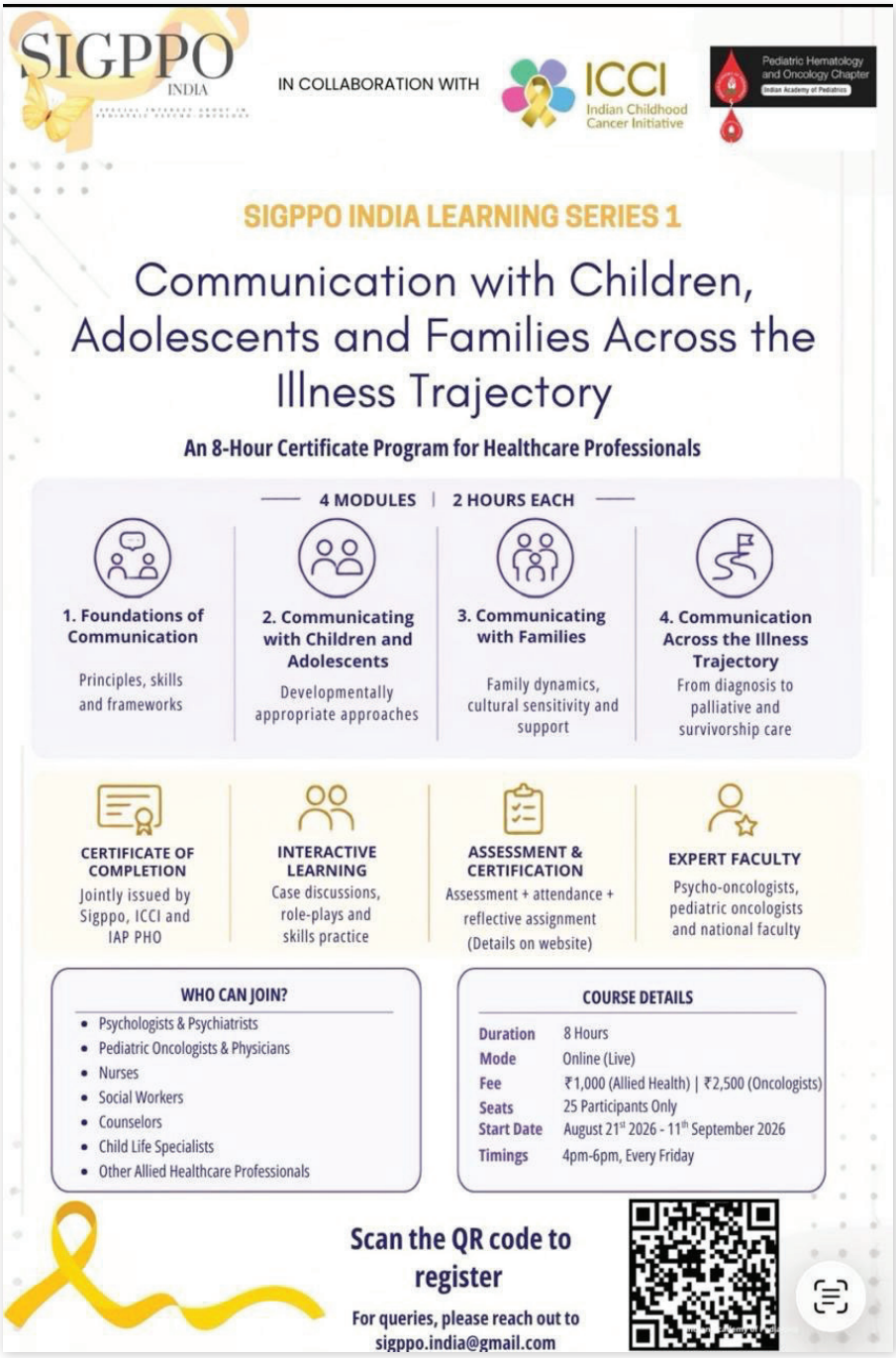
Communication with Children, Adolescents and Families Across the Illness Trajectory

The Special Interest Group in Pediatric Psycho-Oncology (SIGPPO)- India Learning Series commenced with its first session on "Communication with Children, Adolescents and Families Across the Illness Trajectory."

The session focused on communication approaches that are sensitive to the developmental needs of children and adolescents and responsive to the experiences and needs of families throughout the cancer journey.

The first batch had 25 attendees.

The session was delivered through a collaborative training module developed by PHO-IAP, SIGPPO and ICCI.



ICCI Partner Spotlight Campaign

Highlighting the Work Behind Childhood Cancer Care

On the eve of **Childhood Cancer Awareness Month,** ICCI launched its **Partner Spotlight Campaign,** a social media initiative to highlight the work of organisations contributing to childhood cancer care and support across India. The campaign began by featuring St. Jude Together and Access Life Assistance Foundation, showcasing their work and contributions to supporting children with cancer and their families.

Through the campaign, ICCI aims to bring greater visibility to the diverse efforts of its partners and highlight the importance of collaboration in strengthening childhood cancer care.





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