

Budget 2018: Healthcare Needs More Specialists, Boost To Device-Makers



Each year during pre-Budget time, the Indian [healthcare](#) industry points to the one statistic that refuses to change: government spending on healthcare stays put at around one per cent of the GDP. The other pain point is that hospitals are treated on par with the entertainment industry regarding charges for utilities like power consumption. These notwithstanding, many from the industry that Business Today spoke felt it was time a few other issues were also looked at more closely before the Budget.

First, a point that was raised by the pharma industry too, is on spending on medical research and innovation. Another issue is on the severe shortage of specialist talent that is starting to hurt. One could argue that the steering committee looking at the National Medical Commission bill will deal with the medical education but that need not stop the Budget from addressing some of the problems. "We need at least a three-fold increase in the number of specialist doctors in the country and therefore one hopes the Budget will address this issue apart from allocating more funds for undertaking medical innovation, says Dinesh Madhavan, director, healthcare services at HealthCare Global Enterprises, the Bangalore-headquartered major chain in cancer care. The Budget could, for instance, allocate funds for more post graduate institutes so that many of the graduates from the medical colleges are able to take up a post graduate programme.