



ALL INDIA BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED RETIRED EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION

Central Headquarters

Registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 vide Govt. of NCT Delhi No. S/RS/SW/1161/2014

[Registered under Pensioners Portal vide DoP&PW letter No. 4(4)/2021-P&PW(H)7311 dated 04.01.2024]

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No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2024/62

Date: 27th August 2024

To

Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman,
Hon'ble Minister of Finance &
Chairperson, GST Council,
New Delhi - 110001

Sub: Request for withdrawal of GST on diabetic medicines including insulin

Madam,

We are thankful that the GST Council has recently exempted cancer-fighting drugs, medicinal items for rare diseases, and food products for special medical purposes from GST. This exemption is expected to provide significant relief to patients struggling to afford these expensive treatments. It will not be out of context to mention here that the rising prevalence of diabetes in India, now affecting over 101 million people, underscores the urgent need to reconsider the Goods and Services Tax on diabetic medicines.

2. Diabetes is no longer a disease confined to the affluent. It affects people across all socio-economic strata, with a significant portion of the population at risk due to prediabetes. The risk faced by the senior citizens need not be overemphasized. The cost of managing diabetes, including regular medication, is substantial. For many families, especially those with lower incomes, this financial burden can be overwhelming. Ensuring that life-saving medications are accessible to all, regardless of economic status, will be a step towards more equitable healthcare.

3. Apart from the direct costs of diabetes which include medical expenses such as hospital visits, medications, and diagnostic tests, there are indirect costs due to disability or premature death. The chronic nature of diabetes and its complications have long-term consequences on the nation's economy. The rising prevalence of diabetes contributes to increased healthcare costs and reduced economic productivity.

4. Though, as pensioners, we are covered by one or other medical care schemes, availing the benefit of these schemes is easier said than done. Levying of 18% GST on insurance products has made the schemes costly and reduced accessibility. The fact is that most of the pensioners undergoing treatment for diabetes either do not submit any claim or are waiting for months to get the amount reimbursed.

5. Removing GST on diabetic medicines would make these essential drugs more affordable, encouraging better disease management and reducing complications. This could lead to a healthier population and lower healthcare costs in the long run, particularly for the senior citizens.

6. We would therefore request your to consider this issue keeping in mind the affordability of diabetic medicines including insulin and cause withdrawal of GST on these medicines.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R.R. Balasubramanian', with the date '27/8/24' written below it.

(R.R.Balasubramanian)
General Secretary

Copy to:

Shri Jagan Prakash Nadda,
Hon'ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare, GoI