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Russian Regions Slash Cancer Spending Amid Rising Costs

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Maxim Stulov / Vedomosti

Russian regions are being forced to slash spending on cancer medications amid growing costs, new data has revealed.

Statistics for 2016 show that spending on oncology treatment has fallen in almost half of Russia's 85 regions, Russian tabloid Izvestia reported Wednesday.

Some areas cut funds by almost half, with the Far Eastern republic of Sakhalin decreasing its annual spending by 48.5 percent. The Khanty-Mansi region saw spending decrease by 47.9 percent, while the Magadan region cut spending by 39 percent.

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Analysts told Izvestia that rising drug prices were putting pressure on regional governments.

"In Russia, there is no general standard of care for cancer patients," David Melik-Huseynov, Director of Russia's Institute of Healthcare and Medical Management, said.

"The same drugs are needed to treat cancer, regardless of where a patient lives. But everything depends on regional budgets," he said.

Certain regions boosted funding: noticeably in Sevastopol, where spending increased by 451 percent. The Republic of Buryatia also upped funds by 249.9 percent, while the Voronezh region increased their budget by 231.9 percent.

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