

Court orders Bucharest to provide free cancer drugs

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A Romanian court on Wednesday ordered the government to provide crucial drugs to seven cancer patients, including a nine-year-old child, free of charge.

The landmark case was initiated by a group representing [cancer patients](#) arguing that the state should pay for newer and more efficient therapies that have yet to be included on a list of those eligible for reimbursement.

"Today, we won a battle in the war we are fighting with the Romanian [government](#) for access to newer therapies that can save lives," Cezar Irimia, president of the Alliance for Chronically Ill Patients, told AFP.

He noted that the list of reimbursable drugs has not been updated in six years, adding that around 1,000 [patients](#) need [new drugs](#) that they cannot afford.

"The government is denying them the right to live," Irimia said.

Neither the government nor the health ministry were available for comment after the decision, which can be appealed.

Romania's notoriously underfunded health system is beset with corruption and faces an exodus of doctors and nurses seeking better paid jobs abroad.

Romania's cancer mortality rate is 180 per 100,000 inhabitants,

compared with the EU average of 166.9, Eurostat figures show.

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