

# US health startup brings to India cutting-edge cancer diagnostics

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**NEW YORK:** Doctors knew the 17-year-old boy was suffering from a rare strain of cancer called Desmoplastic Small Round Cell Tumor, but were not sure how to treat him.

His parents — also doctors — wanted a second opinion. Delhi's Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute (RGCI), where the boy was admitted, got in touch with a US medical centre.

The treatment changed but the patient's condition didn't.

Star Health Network, a small US health startup that had just signed an alliance with RGCI,

had a suggestion. Would the institute like to try one of its allied partners?

Experts at Fox Chase, a Star partner, were tapped.

The boy is now getting the best treatment in the world near home in Delhi and showing signs of improvement.

Founded in 2008 by US doctors of Indian origin, Star is a global network connecting centres of excellence in the US to centres of need around the world.

It brought RGCI together with Precipio Diagnostics, which represents Yale, late last year, bringing India right up to the forefront of the worldwide fight against cancer.

“We saw this expertise at institutions such as Sloan-Kettering,” said Dr John Sanil Manavalan, one of the co-founders. “We wondered if the same expertise could be made available in India.”

He met Afzal Jamal Naiyer, a medical student from a Jammu and Kashmir school. By 2008, Naiyer was ready to branch out on his own.

He launched Star with Manavalan and others. It was a unique health startup. The Delhi cancer institute now has access to multi-gene cancer DNA testing, which is the newest weapon in the war against the dreaded disease due to the association.