

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
DEPARTMENT OF EX-SERVICEMEN WELFARE
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 358
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17th JULY, 2019

EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME

*358. DR. MANOJ RAJORIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE j{k k ea=h
be pleased to state:

- (a) the time since when the Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) has been operative;
- (b) the number of Ex-servicemen who have availed the facility of the scheme;
- (c) the response and the feedback of the operation of the scheme from Ex-servicemen;
- (d) whether any grievances have come to the notice of the Government; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the remedial measures taken in this regard?

A N S W E R

MINISTER OF DEFENCE

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(SHRI RAJNATH SINGH)

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(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 358 FOR ANSWER ON 17.07.2019 REGARDING 'EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME'.

(a) Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) was launched on 1st April, 2003.

(b) More than 52 lakh persons are availing benefit under ECHS.

(c) & (d): The satisfaction level of ECHS beneficiaries is high. However, some grievances are received which relate to shortage of medicines in Polyclinics, lack of empanelled hospitals/Polyclinics in certain areas, deficiency in services at empanelled/service hospitals and delay in payment of medical reimbursement bills, etc.

(e) The following remedial measures have been taken:-

(i) Non-availability of certain medicines in stock has been addressed through the following measures:

- (a) The CGHS system of Authorised Local Chemists (ALCs) has been approved for ECHS on 22nd August, 2017.
- (b) The CGHS norms for empanelment of Local Chemists have been relaxed on 25th June, 2018 to enable Polyclinics located in rural, semi-urban, remote areas to empanel ALCs.
- (c) Under ALC system, Polyclinics have been allowed to obtain medicines that are not available in stock from authorized local chemists and provide the same to the beneficiaries.
- (d) Further, on 30th January, 2019 the ECHS beneficiaries have been allowed to purchase not-available medicines for a maximum period of 15 days at a time subject to certain financial limits and conditions and seek reimbursement thereof.

(ii) The process of empanelment is kept open round the year and hospitals are free to submit applications for empanelment which are processed and hospitals found fulfilling the requisite norms are empanelled.

(iii) Opening of new polyclinics based on demands of ECHS members and laid down norms is a continuous process. As and when the Government considers it necessary, the Scheme is expanded by opening up of new polyclinics.

(iv) Whenever complaints of deficiency in services against empanelled hospitals are received, the matter is enquired into. If found true, suitable action is taken against them in accordance with rules.

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(v) As per rules, in military stations, the spare capacity available in Military Hospitals is required to be utilized before beneficiaries are referred to private empanelled hospitals. In case of non-availability of spare capacity, service hospitals are empowered to refer the patients to private empanelled hospitals.

(vi) In order to ensure faster processing and payment of reimbursement bills of ESMs, the financial powers of ECHS authorities (Regional Director, Deputy Managing Director and Managing Director) have been enhanced from Rs.3 lakhs, Rs.5 lakhs and Rs.10 lakhs to Rs. 4 lakhs, Rs.8 lakhs and Rs.15 lakhs respectively w.e.f. 09.07.2019.
