

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 535  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2022**

**MEDICINE ACCESSIBILITY IN RURAL AREAS**

**535: SHRI D.K. SURESH:  
SHRI K. MURALEEDHARAN:  
SHRI ANTO ANTONY:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the price of various drug portfolios have increased despite active regulation of the price of drugs, if so, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the Government is aware that medicine accessibility in rural India has not been scaled up even after large spending on schemes such as Ayushman Bharat, if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that branded drugs under the Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) pharmacies are not available, if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to improve medical assistance in pharmacies that are understaffed?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND  
FAMILY WELFARE  
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

(a): As per the information provided by Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) under DoP fixes the ceiling price of medicines specified in the first schedule of Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 (DPCO, 2013). All manufacturers of medicines have to sell their products within the ceiling price (plus applicable Goods and Service Tax) fixed by the NPPA. The annual increase allowed in the case of Scheduled formulations is upto the level of annual revision in Wholesale price index (WPI). NPPA also fixes retail price of a new drug under DPCO, 2013 for existing manufacturers of scheduled formulations. The notified retail prices are applicable only to the applicant manufacturing/ marketing companies. For other non-scheduled formulations, a manufacturer is at liberty to fix the maximum retail price of a non-scheduled formulation launched by it. In case of

non-scheduled formulation, no manufacturers can increase MRP by more than 10% of MRP during preceding 12 months. Instances of overcharging are dealt with by NPPA under the relevant provisions of DPCO, 2013. In addition, Para 19 of DPCO, 2013 provides for fixation of ceiling price or retail price of any drug in public interest for such period, as deemed fit, in case of extra-ordinary circumstances.

(b): To supplement States' efforts, National Health Mission (NHM), has launched the Free Drugs Service Initiative to ensure free medicines to healthcare seekers at all levels of the public health system. To ensure the provision of free essential medicines NHM provides budgetary support to the States/UTs through Program Implementation Plans (PIPs). Under the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS), facility wise Essential Medicines Lists (EMLs) has been recommended to the States/UTs.

Under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY), in order to ensure that the hospitals do not overcharge and rates do not vary across hospitals, Empanelled Health Care Providers (EHCP) are paid as per specified package rates. A package consists of all the costs associated with the treatment, including pre and post hospitalisation expenses. These are bundled packages which include all aspects of treatment including pre-admission diagnostics and post discharge medicines for 15 days. The treatment packages include super speciality care like oncology, neurosurgery, cardio-thoracic and cardiovascular surgery.

As of 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 4.18 Crore hospital admissions worth Rs. 48,934.9 Crores have been authorized under the scheme. Thus, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has facilitated the availability of free medicines to eligible beneficiaries availing healthcare services under the scheme

(c): 238 AMRIT Pharmacies are operating in 28 States/UTs. AMRIT Pharmacies are acting as a single point of supply for all medical requirements of the hospitals including Branded/Branded Generic/Generic drugs, surgical items, consumables and implants especially for tertiary care hospitals. For the medicine requirements, AMRIT Pharmacy is keeping stock of 01 (one) Branded Stock Keeping unit (SKU) and one or two Branded Generic/Generic SKUs for a composition and strength as per the prescription pattern of the Hospital and of the General public of that locality.

(d): Since 2014, the number of institutes approved by The Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) for Diploma in Pharmacy (D.Pharm) has increased from 710 to 3333 and for Degree in Pharmacy (B.Pharm), it has increased from 930 to 2411. There are approximately 33857 pharmacists posted at CHC and below level facilities in the country against the requirement of 36530 as per Indian Public Health Standards.

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