

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1988
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12TH FEBRUARY, 2021**

FREE MEDICINES FOR POOR PATIENTS

1988.SHRI P.P. CHAUDHARY:

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

- (a) whether the Government has any scheme currently operational to provide free medicines to poor sections of the society, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has entered into any arrangement in this regard with the States/UTs, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the targeted number of medicines that are being made available free of cost to the poor patients and the funds utilised for the purpose as on date; and
- (d) the extent to which the quality of such drugs procured is ensured?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a) to (d): “Public Health and Hospitals” being a State subject, the primary responsibility of strengthening public healthcare system including provision of free and essential medicines lies with the respective State Governments. However, under National Health Mission (NHM), technical and financial support is provided to the States/UTs to strengthen the public healthcare system including support for ensuring sufficient supply of essential medicines, injections and other medical equipment at public healthcare facilities.

To ensure availability of essential drugs and reduce the Out of Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) of the patients visiting the public health facilities, Government has rolled out the Free Drugs Service Initiative (FDSI) under National Health Mission (NHM).

Under this, financial support is provided to States / UTs for provision of free essential medicines in public health facilities based on the requirements posted by them in their Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs) within their overall resource envelope.

Support under the scheme is available for Procurement of drugs and strengthening /setting up robust systems of procurement, Quality Assurance, Supply chain management and warehousing, Prescription audit, grievance redressal, dissemination of Standard Treatment Guidelines and Establishment of IT enabled platform DVDMS (Drugs & Vaccine Distribution

Management System) for monitoring the real status of procurement and availability of essential medicines.

Ministry has recommended facility wise Essential Medicines List (EML) to be made available at the public healthcare facilities:

- i. Sub Health Centre Health & wellness centre (SHC-HWCs)– 105
- ii. Primary Health Centre Health & wellness centre (PHC-HWCs)- 172
- iii. Community Health Centres (CHCs)- 455
- iv. District Hospital (DHs)- 544

However, States have the flexibility to add more medicines and Essential Drugs List (EDL) of States vary from State to State.

Quality of drugs procured, under Free Drugs Service Initiative, is ensured through the operational guidelines of the initiative that

- i. All drugs must be sourced from Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) compliant manufacturers through robust procurement mechanism.
- ii. Post supply testing of every batch before distributing to the health facilities.