

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2247

ANSWERED ON:24.08.2012

FREE MEDICINES

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

- (a) the names of the States where free medicines are being provided to the poor in the country;
- (b) whether the Union Government has set up a Central Procurement Agency (CPA) for bulk procurement of drugs;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has asked the State Governments to create their own Essential Drugs List (EDL) keeping in mind the diseases that affect them most;
- (e) if so, the response of the State Governments thereon; and
- (f) the steps taken by the Government to ensure availability of essential drugs to all patients across the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABIAZAD)

- (a) The medicines for distribution under various national health programmes are mostly procured centrally by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Government of India and distributed to all States for free distribution through public health facilities. Further, funds are disbursed to states under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), from which the states procure medicines for free distribution through public health facilities.
- (b) The Government of India has registered a Central Procurement Agency (CPA) under the Societies Registration Act 1860, in the name of Central Medical Services Society (CMSS).
- (c) The CPA is expected to become operational during the current financial year 2012-13. The Society shall initiate procurement of drugs and vaccines under various healthcare programmes.
- (d) to (f) the state governments are being urged and would be required to adopt an essential drug list (EDL) for procurement of drugs required by them.

Government of India proposes to start an Initiative for free supply of essential medicines in Public Health Facilities in the country to provide affordable health care to the people by reducing out of pocket expenses of medicines. This initiative will promote rational use of medicines. The initiative is based on the Tamil Nadu model where medicines procured in bulk by the Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation (TNMSC), in generic name, directly from the manufacturers are supplied free of cost through an IT enabled supply chain management system to the public. There is a provision of Rs.100 crore in the budget of 2012-13 for this purpose.