

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:391
ANSWERED ON:23.11.2012
FREE MEDICINES FOR ALL
Kumar Shri P.

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to introduce a national scheme for free medicine for all;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the features of the scheme and the time by which the above scheme is likely to be implemented;
- (c) whether the Government has received any representation in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the other steps being taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure uninterrupted availability of medicines to all the poor people in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI ABU HASEM KHAN CHOUDHURY)

(a) to (b): There is a proposal in the 12th Five Year Plan draft chapter on Health about cost free access to essential medicines in public facilities for reducing out of pocket expenditure on health care. The essential features of any such scheme will include preparation of list of essential medicines, development of standard treatment guidelines, robust procurement systems, IT based supply-chain systems, drug warehousing, quality assurance, prescription audit etc.

(c)&(d): There have been requests from many quarters to provide free essential medicines in public health facilities. The High Level Expert Group (HLEG) set up by the Planning Commission on Universal Health Coverage has also recommended provision of free essential medicines through public facilities and public expenditure on drugs to be increased to 0.5 per cent of the GDP.

(e) Under NRHM, the proposals received from the States through their Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs) for ensuring uninterrupted availability of essential medicines to those using public health facilities have been supported by the Government of India. Further, incentives to states upto 5% of their NRHM outlay have been introduced in 2012-13 for establishing policy frameworks and systems for providing free generic medicines to all those who access public health facilities.