

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:858

ANSWERED ON:27.02.2015

ESSENTIAL MEDICINES

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

- (a) the number of life saving drugs enlisted as essential along with the criteria therefor and the number out of them under price control;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to revise the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) 2011 and also bring in life saving medical devices under the said list in order to check their prices;
- (c) if so, the details thereof along with the number of medicines/devices identified to be included/ excluded in/from the NLEM;
- (d) whether the Government has received any proposal for inclusion of certain cancer medicines in the NLEM, if so, the details thereof and the action taken/ proposed to be taken by the Government thereon; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to link availability of essential medicines under the National Health Assurance Mission and distribute them free of cost, if so, the details thereof and the financial and operation modalities worked out for the purpose?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)

- (a): The essential or life saving drugs have not been defined under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules thereunder. However, essential drugs, as termed in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), 2011 are the drugs that satisfy the priority healthcare needs of majority of the population. The NLEM, 2011 contains 348 essential medicines with 680 formulations. Currently, the prices of 509 formulations are regulated by the provisions made under the Schedule-I of the Drugs Price Control Order, 2013.
- (b) & (c): NLEM, 2011 is proposed to be revised after extensive consultations with all concerned. Details in this regard have not been finalized as yet.
- (d): During stakeholder consultations held by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, a presentation was made for addition of certain anti-cancer drugs in the NLEM. NPPA has not recommended inclusion of these medicines in the NLEM keeping in view the complex nature of treatment and typical distribution channels of anti-cancer medicines.
- (e): National Health Assurance Mission has not been finalized and launched as yet and therefore, the question does not arise.