

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:406

ANSWERED ON:11.07.2014

FREE MEDICINES TO THE PATIENTS

Kateel Shri Nalin Kumar;Thakur Shri Anurag Singh

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

- (a) whether the Government has launched/proposes to launch any scheme to provide essential and life saving medicines free of cost to the patients getting treatment under the National Health Mission (NHM);
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the amount allocated for this purpose during the 12th Five Year Plan, year and State/ Union Territory-wise;
- (c) the mechanism being put in place by the Government for effective monitoring of the scheme; and
- (d) the further steps taken/proposed by the Government to reduce out of pocket expenses on healthcare in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. HARSH VARDHAN)

(a) & (b): Public Health is a State subject. Under National Rural Health Mission financial support is provided for strengthening public healthcare delivery system including support for provision of free essential drugs to those who access public health facilities. Under the 'National Health Mission-Free Drugs Service' initiative launched in 2013, substantial funding within their annual allocation under the Mission is also provided for provision of free drugs to those who access public health facilities subject to States/UTs setting up or agreeing to set up robust systems of procurement, quality assurance, logistics & IT infrastructure for improved supply chain management besides having facility level wise Essential Drug List (EDL), Standard Treatment Guidelines (STDs) and systems of prescription audit to ensure rational drug use and naming the initiative as 'NHM-Free Drug Service Initiative'. Addition of new schemes or modification of existing schemes is a regular activity under NHM.

The State/UT wise details of support provided for drugs as Cash and Kind grants during 2012-13 and 2013-14 is Annexed.

(c): States/UTs are required to put in place robust procurement and IT enabled logistic systems, quality assurance mechanisms prepare facility-wise EDLs and STGs and provide for prescription audits. Funds for setting up these systems are also are being provided to States/UTs under the National Health Mission. National Health System Resource Centre (NHSRC) has been tasked to undertake periodic assessment of drugs procurement and logistics system of the States/UTs.

(d): To reduce out of pocket expenses on health care, support is being provided to States/UTs under NHM (NRHM) for strengthening the public health systems through support for infrastructure, human resource, drugs, equipment etc. Support is also being provided for free ambulance services, free services through Mobile Medical Units besides host of free services under programmes such as Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK), Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), Universal Immunisation Programme, Family Planning Programme and services under various Disease Control Programmes such as National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme, Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme, National Leprosy Eradication Programme, National AIDS Control Programme etc In addition, two initiatives have been launched under NHM namely, the NHM Free Drugs Service Initiative and the NHM Free Diagnostic Service Initiative under which substantial funding (within their annual allocation under the Mission) can be provided to State/UTs to provide free essential drugs and free essential diagnostics to those who access public health facilities subject to specified conditions mentioned in reply to part (a) and part (b) above. The Ministry has initiated the process of strengthening the above with a package of assured services at the public health facilities.