

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1034

ANSWERED ON:28.11.2014

ESSENTIAL DRUGS

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

- (a) the criteria to declare drugs as essential or life saving along with the number of such enlisted drugs in the country;
- (b) whether shortage of certain essential or life saving drugs including Human Serum Albumin (HSA) have been reported in Delhi and certain other parts of the country;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with the corrective measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to overcome the problem;
- (d) whether the Government has received any representation in this regard and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the time by which the Government proposes to declare more number of drugs as essential or life saving drugs in the country?

**Answer**

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

(a): The essential medicines or life saving drugs have not been defined in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules made thereunder. However, essential medicines, as termed in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), 2011, are those that satisfy the priority healthcare needs of majority of the population. NLEM, 2011 contains 348 essential medicines.

(b) to (d): The Department of Pharmaceuticals monitors the shortages and availability of drugs on the basis of monthly reports received from States Drug Control Administration. That Department has informed that reports on short supply of certain medicines including Human Serum Albumin (HSA) were received by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA). Besides, during the current year, two reports/ representations regarding shortage of HSA have also been received from Delhi and Chandigarh by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization.

The NPPA has issued Notification No. S.O. 2292(E) dated 09.09.2014 directing all the manufacturers/ importers/ marketing companies of the drugs reported to be in short supply to submit data about production/ availability as also a compliance report for resolving their shortage in the country. In case of non-compliance of the directions, the manufacturers/ marketers/ importers are liable for penal action under the relevant provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

(e): In order to review and revise the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), 2011, the Government constituted a Core Committee of Experts on May 7, 2014, which will submit its report within six months from the date of its first meeting.