

Kerala Sets Up Drug Price Monitor

Kerala has become the first State to set up a Price Monitoring and Research Unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO).

Composition

- PMRU will be registered as a society with following composition:
 - State Health Secretary (Chairman)
 - Drugs Controller (Member secretary)
 - State government representative (Member)
 - Representatives of private pharmaceutical companies (Members)
 - Representative from consumer rights protection fora (Member)
- The society would also have an executive committee headed by the Drugs Controller.

Background

- This comes more than five years after the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)
 proposed such a system for the States and the Union Territories.
- The suggestion to set up PMRUs was made against the backdrop of the lack of a field-level link between the NPPA and the State Drugs Controllers and State Drug Inspectors to monitor drug prices.

Objective

- The PMRU will work to develop synergy between the central and state authorities.
- It will provide technical help to the State Drug Controllers and the NPPA to monitor notified prices of medicines.
- Detect violation of the provisions of the DPCO.
- Look at price compliance.
- To collect test samples of medicines, and collect and compile market-based data of scheduled as well as non-scheduled formulations.

National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority

- NPPA is an organization under Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers which was set up in 1997 to revise the prices of controlled bulk drugs and formulations and to enforce prices and availability of the medicines in the country, under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 1995.
- The prices are now fixed/revised under Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013.
- It also monitors the prices of decontrolled drugs in order to keep them at reasonable levels.

