

Private firms asked to supply quality drugs to generic stores

Plan to launch 40 stores by March in AP, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan

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IN order to make all essential drugs available at the newly launched generic drug stores, the department of pharmaceuticals have asked private drug companies to supply quality medicines. The department, under the ministry of chemicals and fertiliser, has received 76 applications from interested companies. Drugs at these stores would be sold at much lower prices as compared to the branded drugs sold in the open market.

These drug stores — Jan Aushadhi — would offer drugs at less than 75 per cent of the prices of branded medicines available in the market. For example, 10 tablets of ciprofloxacin (anti-infective) is sold at Rs 10.40 as against popular brands that are sold at about Rs 55, while diclofenac (pain killer) would be sold at Rs 3.10/strip as compared to a brand price of Rs 36.70/strip.

Unbranded generic medicines are similar to other medicines and are only known by their chemical

Jan Aushadhi to offer drugs at less than 75 per cent of the prices of branded medicines

formulation. At present, only pharma public sector undertakings are supplying medicines to these stores. The UPA government recently launched the campaign in several states.

"To ensure uninterrupted supply of life saving drugs in these stores, we have invited private drug companies to participate. At present there are over 70 drugs offered through the stores, but we expect to double the number of drugs covering all therapeutic areas in the next two weeks," Ashok Kumar,

secretary, department of pharmaceuticals said.

The initiative is in line with UPA's common minimum programme (CMP) to provide affordable medicines to the financially weaker sections of the society. The department has urged various state governments to adopt and promote such stores by asking doctors in government hospitals to prescribe generic drugs.

"We have invited the chief ministers of every state with an aim to form a consensus over the issue of prescription of unbranded

Affordable at last

Name of Salt	Therapeutic area	Strength	Price at generic stores	Brand price in the open market	%
Ciprofloxacin	Anti-infective	500 mg	21.10	97	
Diclofenac	Pain killer	100 mg	3.10	36.70	
Cetirizine	Anti-allergic	10 mg	2.50	20	
Paracetamol	Fever	500 mg	2.30	10	
Nimesulide	Pain killer	100 mg	2.50	25	

* Prices are for 10 tablets

generic medicines in all government hospitals," Ram Vilas Paswan minister of chemicals and fertilisers said while inaugurating a generic drug store in New Delhi.

The government plans to launch 40 such stores by March in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan.

When asked if the government was open to sourcing medicines from small-scale industries, Kumar said, "quality is our hallmark. We will go

through the application we have got and allow companies to supply drugs after ensuring quality of drugs they produce." The department has asked the plan commission to allot Rs crore to be used to create awareness about the initiative. Kumar, however, clarified that the government would not provide any subsidy to the medicines sold through the drug stores.

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