

Cap on prices of med devices next?

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New Delhi: The government might cap the maximum retail price (MRP) of critical medical devices including stents, catheters and implants, official sources said. The government is evaluating a separate pricing policy to keep costs of such key devices under check.

While this policy is likely to be similar to the one existing for medicines, the idea is to define medical devices separately from drugs and regulate their prices with a different mechanism, the official told TOI. The drug price regulator, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), has been asked to work out a detailed draft on medical devices along with a possible mechanism to regulate

COST-CONTROL MEASURES

➤ Govt working on a **proposal to bring all medical devices under direct price control**

➤ Government says **medical devices contribute significantly to cost of healthcare** and therefore, it is **important to monitor prices**

➤ Currently, **prices of only condoms and intra-uterine devices (Cu-T) are capped**

by NPPA

➤ **Companies are asked not to hike prices of medical devices beyond 10% in a year**

Medical device market in India was pegged at **\$6.3 billion in 2013, growing annually at 10-12%**

➤ **India imports around 70% of the medical devices used here**

late their prices, he added.

Currently, prices of only two medical devices — condoms and Intra Uterine Devices — are directly under government control and prices are capped for these products. Apart from these, there is a price ceiling on 348 essential medicines. The government allows an annual

hike of 10% in prices of all other medicines.

The regulator is of the view that because of over dependency on imported medical devices, prices of these products have gone up stupendously in past few years. Moreover, in the absence of price regulation, doctors, hospitals and retailers allegedly

make money as commission for prescribing expensive stents or branded medicines. The idea is to bring such practices under scrutiny through the new policy. The medical devices market in India was estimated at \$6.3 billion in 2013 and growing annually at 10-12%. Most of it is dominated by imported products. According to a recent report by the The Boston Consulting Group, around 70% of the medical devices used in India are imported.

This bridging of the gap between imported and home-made products is another area in which the government might decide on new rules. Experts say domestic products are, on average, far inferior to imported ones.

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Ravi.