

Medical council to approach Centre to check inflated MRP on medicines

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Thousands of poor patients are paying through their nose for a large number of life-saving and other drugs as these are allegedly coming to them at a Maximum Retail Price (MRP) bolstered on labels by up to 500-600 per cent of their actual cost.

Perturbed over the phenomena and the plight of the common man, the Punjab Medical Council (PMC) has not only decided to approach the Centre and the Medical

Council of India (MCI) but also the National Human Rights Commission to ensure that the practice of "bolstered MRP" on medicine labels was stopped immediately to save "fleecing" of thousands of patients.

Punjab Medical Council president, Dr GS Grewal, while talking to The Tribune, said, "The cost of the medicines alone amounts to nearly 60 per cent of the expenditure on health by the common man. We are receiving a large number of complaints that the MRP of many medicines

was printed 500-600 per cent more than their actual price. Patients normally don't get any bills for medicines purchased from chemists...

"The drug prices need to be streamlined and we are communicating with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and also the Ministry of Chemical and Fertilisers for the rectification and uniformity in drug prices. We are also going to knock the doors of the National Human Rights Commission to seek relief for patients."

Cuts and commissions

offered by pharmaceutical companies to doctors for prescription of medicines of particular brands is another problem even as the Code of Medical Ethics prohibited doctors from accepting any such freebies from the companies. The MCI has asked the council to be serious on this issue and notices have been served to those accepting such gratifications.

"We are in touch with the Drug Controller of India to get the prices of drugs reduced once such freebies are stopped," said Dr Grewal.

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