



drishti

Centre Persists with 'toothless' Pharma Codes

 drishtias.com/printpdf/centre-persists-with-toothless-pharma-codes

Why in News

The **Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP)**, under the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**, has requested the pharmaceutical companies to abide by the **voluntary Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP)**.

Key Points

- The **Indian Medical Association (IMA)**, **Alliance of Doctors for Ethical Healthcare (ADEH)**, doctors, civil society and patients groups have asked the centre to make the UCPMP mandatory because it holds no value unless it becomes compulsory.
- DoP has also requested to ensure that the pharma companies adhere to the provisions of UCPMP and **do not promote pharma products unethically** during the conferences conducted by doctors.

Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices

- This is a set of guidelines published by the Central Government in December 2014 to the pharmaceutical industry for the promotion and marketing of drugs and medical devices. However, these guidelines are voluntary and do not have the force of law, at present.
- According to **Clause 7.2 of the UCPMP**, "companies or their associations/representatives shall not extend any hospitality like hotel accommodation to healthcare practitioners and their family members under any pretext".

Background

- Till now, there have been **several instances of breach of the UCPMP by pharma** companies.
 - In order to promote their products, pharma companies allegedly arrange accommodation in five-star hotels, local sight-seeing, etc. in conferences conducted by doctors.
 - This is considered unethical marketing and promotion by the experts and they have demanded implementation of a mandatory mechanism for company disclosures of payments towards doctors and professional bodies, including via third parties.
 - The disclosures, which should be made at intervals and put in the public domain, should include the amount spent, individual or entity to which payment was made, and the reason for payment, including any services rendered.
- DoP needs to take steps towards instituting statutory regulation of unethical marketing and promotion and make compliance under the UCPMP compulsory.

Indian Medical Association

- It is the only **representative, national voluntary organisation** of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large.
- Indian Medical Association is the founding member of the **World Medical Association (WMA)**.
- IMA hosted the **3rd World Conference on Medical Education** in New Delhi in 1966.

Alliance of Doctors for Ethical Healthcare

- It is a pan-Indian network of doctors who want to raise voice from within the medical fraternity about malpractices, systemic issues and policies related to healthcare.
- It aims to build critical social demand to bring in Universal Healthcare in India.

Source: TH