

National Medical Commission to Replace MCI

The National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2017, which is set to replace the existing Medical Council Act, 1956, has been cleared by the Cabinet. One of the main reasons of the NMC is basically to curb corruption in the existing set up, but some say that the National Medical Commission would create a pair of Siamese twins—two different heads, but for the most part, a single corrupt body, which only is debatable depending how you look at it.



The key features of the bill include:

1. The Bill allows practitioners of Ayurveda and other traditional Indian systems of medicine the license to prescribe allopathic drugs after they have passed a 'bridge course.'
2. A National Medical Commission is to be set up within three years of the passage of the Bill. State governments will establish State Medical Councils at the state level. The NMC will consist of 25 members, appointed by the central government.
3. Some of the functions of the NMC include –
 - (i) Framing policies for regulating medical institutions and medical professionals.
 - (ii) Assessing the requirements of healthcare-related human resources and infrastructure.
 - (iii) Framing guidelines for the determination of fees for up to 40% of the seats in private medical institutions and deemed universities, which are regulated as per the Bill.
4. The central government will constitute the Medical Advisory Council, which will be the primary platform through which the states/union territories can put forth their views and concerns before the NMC.
5. There will be a uniform National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test for admission to undergraduate medical education in all-medical institutions regulated by the Bill. The NMC will specify the manner of conducting common counseling for admission in all such medical institutions.
6. According to the Bill, the Ethics and Medical Registration (EMR) Board shall maintain a separate National Register—including the names of licensed AYUSH practitioners. The names of BAMS (Bachelor of Ayurveda Medicine and Surgery) and BHMS (Bachelor of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery) graduates are already registered with their respective councils.
7. One of the clauses of the Bill calls for a joint sitting of the National Medical Commission, the Central Council of Homoeopathy, and the Central Council of Indian Medicine at least once a year "to enhance the interface between homoeopathy, Indian Systems of Medicine and modern systems of medicine".

A recent paper by Brookings India, a policy research institution titled—Restructuring the Medical Council of India—stated that the National Medical Commission Bill introduces much needed reform to the Indian accreditation system, however, it lacks in structural integrity, structural vision, and institutional vision.

There is also some controversy of people who are not fully trained as medical professionals to do a bridge course and get licensed to practise modern medicine even without qualifying which may lead to many issues.

How the NMC eventually will effect all medical institutes is not known exactly but it already has given some food for thought to the medical fraternity and only time will tell if it becomes a game changer or just another appellate authority.

REFERENCES

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