

Sir, my second supplementary is this. The General Practitioners play a vital role in the treatment of the elderly patients because they cannot go beyond their localities in most of the cases. I would like to know whether a programme is being contemplated by the Health Department of the Central Government to introduce some courses to train and retrain General Practitioners of this country who primarily treat the older patients.

DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS: Sir, firstly, the Medical Council of India is a recommendatory body; it recommends various measures to the Government. The Government looks into them and if they are viable, then the Government takes up them.

Secondly, the hon. Member has said about the General Practitioners. Sir, currently there are not much facilities exclusively for senior citizens in the country. Let me say this that only in Madras Medical College, there are certain beds allocated for senior citizens. We need to have more number of beds specified for senior citizens, and then only there will be a lot more awareness towards that. In fact, I have already mentioned to the hon. Member that the National Board of Examinations is considering to start post-graduate courses in Geriatrics...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Government's policy on new pharmacies

*247. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether affordability of drugs in the product patent era is considered a priority by the present Government;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to set up pharmacies across the country;

(c) whether his Ministry has decided to focus on healthcare and access to cheap drugs by setting up pharmacy chains through a Centre-State initiative;

(d) if so, whether the proposal has been prepared and by what time it is likely to be announced; and

(e) to what extent it will be helpful for the people to have cheaper drugs?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise in view of reply to (b) and (c), as above.

Project on health

*248. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the UN's State of World Population Report, 2004, there is an urgent need for India to spend more on health and education;

(b) if so, the percentage of GDP Government are spending on health for the last ten years, year-wise;

(c) the allocation that has been made by Government to health sector during the said period, year-wise and;

(d) the allocation that has been made by all States to health sector during the said period, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (d) The UN's State of World Population Report 2004 in the annexure on demographic, social and economic indicators has indicated that public health expenditure on health as a percentage of GDP in India is 0.9%. The Report states that additional resources would be needed at different levels of health systems and for supportive interventions in areas such as education, mortality reduction, women's empowerment and social participation. This has been stated for all developing countries and not specifically in the context of India. In India, total health expenditure as a percentage of GDP has been in the vicinity of 5.2% and public spending