

FICCI launches Self-regulation Code of Conduct for the e-pharmacy sector
Self-Regulation Code of Conduct for the e-pharmacy sector in the interest of consumer

e-pharmacy provides digital tracking and traceability of medicines, improves access & affordability of medicines for the patient

NEW DELHI, 21 November 2016: The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) today announced the **launch of Self-regulation Code of Conduct for the E pharmacy sector** in the presence of key stakeholders here.

Accessibility, affordability and lack of awareness are the major challenges for last mile access to medicines. These barriers could be effectively overcome by adopting technology, specifically the Internet, into the healthcare system. Over the last one year, E-pharmacy has come up as a significant channel to provide last mile access to medicines. This will most importantly benefit patients of chronic diseases, elderly patients and sick patients who are not in a condition to go out to find a pharmacy.

The E-Pharmacy model provides **tracking and traceability of medicines**, addressing the problem of **counterfeit medicines**, consumption of drugs without prescription, tax loss and provides value added services for consumer empowerment in healthcare, which are well aligned with Digital India initiative of our Honourable Prime Minister with a vision to transform the country into a digitally empowered society. The conference started with the release of the Self-regulation Code of Conduct –an attempt by the Industry to adhere to the highest professional standards and to have proper safeguards so as to ensure that consumer's health and safety is not compromised.

1. Processing medicines against Prescription

Scheduled medicines must be processed only against a valid copy of prescription (physical or scanned copy) of a registered medical practitioner

2. Restriction of Sensitive habit forming medicines

E pharmacy must ensure that no schedule X and other sensitive habit forming medicines are processed through their platform. Ensure there are adequate checks and balances in place to prevent sale of any such drugs.

3. Dispensation only from duly licensed pharmacy domiciled in India

E Pharmacy must ensure that the medicines are dispensed through licensed pharmacies only. The E pharmacy must make reasonable effort to ensure that all the pharmacy partners (before facilitating the sale of any medicines through such pharmacy partners) are duly registered under the Drugs & Cosmetics Act/ Rules.

4. Convenient access of medicines

E-pharmacy player must make suitable arrangements to ensure that the medicines are packed, transported and delivered in such a way that their integrity, quality, and effectiveness are preserved.

5. Public health Initiatives of Government of India

E pharmacy players must partner with Government for any recall of medicines and collect adverse events of medicines (consumer reports) and comply to submit them to National Centre for Pharmacovigilance.

6. Customer grievances

E pharmacy must ensure that there is a proper mechanism in place to address any queries or grievances that the end-customer may have. E pharmacy players must appoint an ombudsman commission comprising of reputed members of civil society to address any public grievance. The Ombudsman commission shall be appointed for six months by members of the governing council in consultation with other stakeholders.

Dr. Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI voiced the support of consumer friendly models and mentioned that India needs to move with the times and embrace new age models to stay ahead. Also FICCI has been at the forefront helping many sectors operate with a process of developing self-governance models, and this initiative is a step in the right direction to help enable this sector of the economy

Mr. Arvind Gupta, Head of Digital India Foundation said “we need to embrace technology – in both offline and online models. There is a great opportunity to take this ecosystem ahead by leveraging the India stack using the existing infrastructure of Aadhar and Digi-locker to maintain the repository of prescription, health records and monitor the dispensing of sensitive medicines. All pharmacies, online or offline, should check prescriptions on this locker”

Noted consumer activist, **Mr. Bejon Mishra**, welcomed the initiative and re-iterated that there is no difference between e-Pharmacy and offline pharmacy, and both should operate with compliance and maintain proper records and dispense with prescription. He also congratulated the effort of the association to come up with progressive self-regulation framework and suggested that there be mechanisms put in place to make sure this is adhered to.

Mr. Prashant Tandon, CEO and Founder of 1mg mentioned that this group of progressive e-pharmacies have come up with code of conduct in the interest of consumers and as a group they look forward to productive engagement with the regulator to help make the Indian pharmacy sector a model sector.”

Mr. Pawan Kaul, Co-Chair of FICCI e-commerce committee added that “by recognising and registering the legitimate e pharmacies, Government can easily address the challenges by maintaining sanctity of both IT act and Drug and Cosmetic Act. This will bring effectiveness and efficiency in the entire ecosystem.”

The conference saw participation from key stakeholders across the spectrum Dr. Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI; Mr. Arvind Gupta, Digital India Foundation; Mr. Bejon Misra, Leading Consumer Activist; Mr. Prashant Tandon, CEO of 1mg; Mr. Dharmil Sheth, Co-founder of PharmEasy; Mr. Pawan Kaul, Co-Chair of FICCI E-commerce committee; Mr. Tushar Kumar, CEO of Medlife; Mr. Pradeep Dadha, Founder Netmeds; Mr. Rajiv Ranjan, CEO of mChemist and other representatives from the Industry.

Attached: Voluntary code of conduct for e-pharmacies in India

FICCI MEDIA DIVISION



“Voluntary Code of Conduct

For

E Pharmacies in India”

Voluntary Code of Conduct for E pharmacies in India

The growth of the Internet has given rise to various technology driven models, to access and serve consumers in a fast paced and most efficient way.

Accessibility, affordability and lack of awareness are the major challenges for last mile access to medicines. These barriers could be effectively overcome by adopting technology, specifically the Internet, into the healthcare system. Over the last one year e-pharmacy has come up as an important channel of providing last mile access to medicines. This will most importantly benefit patients of chronic diseases, elderly patients and sick patients who are not in a condition to go out to find a pharmacy. E-Pharmacy also offers competitive pricing which thereby enables less affluent people to afford medicines.

E-Pharmacy models provides **tracking and traceability** of medicines, addressing the problem of **counterfeit medicines, consumption of drugs without prescription, tax loss** and provides value added services for consumer empowerment in healthcare, which are well aligned with **Digital India initiative** of our Honourable Prime Minister with a vision to transform the country into a digitally empowered society.

An e-Pharmacy aligns very well with the national development objectives and has clear and tangible benefits to the consumers as well as the industry. Meanwhile, it has also been observed that growth of e-Commerce and retail are complimentary and reinforce each other. By leveraging the technology in a smart way and under stringent regulatory control, the e-Pharmacy has a scope of adding immense value to the existing retail industry in India.

This Voluntary Code of Conduct is a self-regulatory attempt by the Industry to adhere to highest professional standards and have proper safeguards to ensure that consumer's health and safety is not compromised.

Mission Statement

"Improve access and affordability of medicines for consumers by unleashing the power of technology for better health, better medication, and availability of better facilities to the farthest corner of the country".

Components of the Code of Conduct:

All members commit to hold ourselves to the highest standards and voluntarily commit that our operations shall operate with the following safeguards:

1. Processing medicines against Prescription

Scheduled medicines must be processed only against a valid copy of prescription (physical or scanned copy) of a registered medical practitioner. When processing medicines against prescription the pharmacist must:

- Ensure clinical appropriateness of the prescription for the patient.

2. Sensitive habit forming medicines

E pharmacy must ensure that no schedule X and other sensitive habit forming medicines are processed from their platform. The list must be updated periodically and shared with all the players.

E pharmacy must:

- 2.1 Ensure there are adequate checks and balances in place to prevent sale of any such drugs
- 2.2 E Pharmacy who wish to facilitate sale of such medicines would need to procure the physical prescription from the consumer and validate dosage with the doctor with suitable records
- 2.3 E Pharmacy player must work with Government to create an electronic tool for proper surveillance of such medicines – where for every dispensation, the consumer name, doctor name and prescribing pharmacy details are recorded and made available to the regulator

3. Dispensation only from duly licensed pharmacy domiciled in India

3.1 E Pharmacy must ensure that the medicines are finally dispensed through licensed pharmacies only.

- E pharmacy must make reasonable effort to:

3.1 Ensure all the pharmacy partners (before facilitating the sale of any medicines through such pharmacy partners) are duly registered under the Drugs & Cosmetics Act/ Rules.

3.2 Ensure that the sale of medicines (or facilitation of sale of medicines) is only within India.

- 3.3 Ensure that pharmacy (or pharmacy partner) must provide the consumer a valid bill containing name and license number of pharmacy, medicines dispensed, prices, batch no and expiry date by item
- 3.4 Ensure dispensing by the pharmacy (or pharmacy partner) dispensing the medicine under the personal supervision of a registered pharmacist
- 3.5 Ensure pharmacy (or pharmacy partner) maintain proper record of all the transactions

4. Delivery of medicines

Medicines must be delivered safely and with appropriate instructions. When delivering medicines to the patient, the e-pharmacy player must:

- 4.1 Make suitable arrangements to ensure that the medicines are packed, transported and delivered in such a way that their integrity, quality, and effectiveness are preserved.
- 4.2 Ensure the integrity of cold chain and safe transportation of temperature sensitive medicines
- 4.3 Ensure that there is verifiable audit trail for the medicine from initial request to delivery of medicines
- 4.4 Ensure that confidentiality of patient information

5. Public health Initiatives of Government of India

- 5.1 E pharmacy players must partner with Government for any recall of medicines based on batch no communicated by the appropriate authorities.
- 5.2 E pharmacy players must create a forum to collect and compile adverse events of medicines (consumer reports) and will submit them to National Centre for Pharmacovigilance
- 5.3 E pharmacy players must support Government initiative of Jan Aushadhi medicines by creating awareness in the consumers

6. Customer Grievances

E pharmacy must ensure that there is a proper mechanism in place to address any queries or grievances that the end-customer may have. E pharmacy players must:

- 6.1 Appoint an ombudsman commission comprising of 3 reputed members of civil society to address any public grievance. The Ombudsman commission shall be appointed for six months by members of the governing council in consultation with other stakeholders.

6.2 Consumers through this emerging channel are be able to order medicines in a convenient manner from their mobile phones or computers. This will significantly help patients who are old and sick and not in a condition to go out to find a pharmacy. This is also pertinent with the increasing nuclear family concept, working couples, increasing number of elderly population, and urban development in the periphery of the metro cities.

Annexure -1

WHAT IS A VALID PRESCRIPTION?

Doctor's details

Dr. Varun, MBBS, MD

Name of Hospital / Clinic

Address of Hospital / Clinic

Regd. No.

Patient's details

Name of Patient Age

Address of Patient Date of consultation....

Medicine Name	Strength	Dose	Duration
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E.g. Metformin	500mg	0-1-0	6 months
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*Doctor's
Signature*

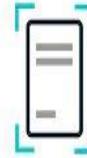
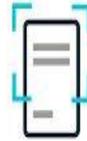
DOCTOR'S STAMP

Medicine details

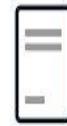
Doctor's sign + stamp



DO NOT crop/
cut out any part
of the prescription



Please upload a
clear image of the
prescription



IMPORTANT

To order affordable substitutes

Request your doctor to write the generic name of the medicine (For e.g. Paracetamol is the generic name, while Crocin is the brand name).

Need to take a medicine for a long time?

Request your doctor to mention the duration of the treatment, for e.g. 6 months or 1 year.