

Report on the Meeting held at Director of Drug Controller on Consumer Grievances

Department: Director of Drug Control

The following attended the meeting.

Department Representatives

Director of Drug Control Mr.M.Baskaran

2- Deputy Directors

2- Assistant Directors

Consumer Representatives

Consumers Association of India

5 other Consumer Organizations

President of Pharmacists Association

1. Welcome Remarks: By Director of Drug Control Mr.M.Baskaran

He briefed the activities of the Department in General. This is the 1st Meeting after 1 year gap. This is also the first Meeting after he took over as Director of Drug Control. He assured that there will be quarterly meetings regularly hereafter. He considers that inputs given by VCO's are important as it reflects the public opinion. He needs such feed back. He is associated with Consumers Organizations for the past 5 years.

2. Remarks of Director of Drug Control on the Department:

The Department issues drug license for manufacturers and sellers. There are 13 Zonal Officers. The strength of Drug Inspectors is only 50% of the sanctioned posts. In 1968 there was full strength of 74 Drug Inspectors at that time there was roughly 20,000 Pharmacies. Now nearly 45,000 Pharmacies are there. But only 42 Drug Inspectors are present.

3. Remarks of Director of Drug Control about Activities of Department:

On an average 250 cases are filed in a year. Last year there were conviction in 161 cases and 65 lakhs fine amount was levied. The Department is Educating public through posters on Do/ Don'ts. A copy of which was supplied to all participants.

4. Response from Director of Drug Control for the questions raised by Consumers Association of India and other VCOs:

- License issued for Allopathy and Homeopathy Drugs. For Ayurvedic, Sidha and Unani Drugs licence is issued by Director of Indian systems of Medicine.

- We have no website. We are asking the Government and writing to NIC for providing one.

- No target is fixed for booking minimum number of cases. We are making surprise checks / visits periodical inspections and attend public complaints.
- We have not come across any banned drugs during our inspection. We have no power to ban drugs. Only Director General of Drug Controller of India can do that.
- We have no budget allotment for publishing awareness on Drug Safety. Awareness on health related topics are done by Health Department. For consumer awareness probably consumer protection department may provide funds.
- Regarding false claims on advertisements. If any a particular drug is claimed to cure a particular disease, we can take action. There are certain provisions under Drugs and Magic Remedies Act. Action can be initiated only if a specific violation or contravention with reference to a particular provision of Act is brought to our notice.
- Out of 10 invitations 7 have turned up. One regret and two absentees . It is only a starting for a regular discussion with VCO.
- No "Vioxx" tablet is available in the market. Director of Drug Control was not aware of it. But one Assistant Director has read the news.
- The Department was not aware of substandard "Clomax" capsules about which a news item appeared in Hindu. Copy of the news item is given to them. They would verify the records and inform us.
- A letter would be addressed to them insisting a reply.
- The Department is aware of Enthrocine – 250 reported as adulterated by CONCERT. They could not give details of lifting of any sample of Enthrocine 250 or seized by them. They would verify the records and inform us.
- A letter would be addressed to them insisting a reply.
- No license is issued so far for Jan Aushathi Drug shop by Director of Drug Control Chennai.
- Director of Drug Control informed that the date expired Drugs are collected by manufactures for accounting and tax purposes. The possibility of repacking is remote since machine packing is done.
- No manufacturer is a member of Drug Price Control Committee - informed the President of Pharmacists Association. We have to confirm and inform the Director of Drug Controller.
- A letter would be addressed to them insisting a reply.
- The No of Hospitals checked for drug quality is not available.

- A letter would be addressed to them insisting a reply.
- Government has been addressed to fill up the Vacancies of drug Inspectors TNPSC has called for candidates.
- Director of Drug Control was not aware of the present stage of the complaint on Team Herbal Water case.
- A letter would be addressed to them insisting a reply
- Director of Drug control could not specifically say an Adulterated or Substandard Drug's Brand Name or Medicine Name that could be purchased from the market for analysis at "CONCERT'S Drug Mini Lab"
- A Telephone call was received from the Neyveli coordinator Mr.Selvaraj that Adyar Cancer Institute is insisting all patients going there for admission to donate Blood compulsorily. This message was discussed with Director of Drug Control. He said that the licensing provision of Blood Banks is only under his control. However, he assured to look into the complaint

At the end of the meeting, CAI met with the Government Analyst Drugs. He said Drugs manufactured at Himachal Pradesh – Solan and Paddy are mostly found to be adulterated. We may try to identify such samples from market for analysis.

We will keep you posted of the developments. Please send your comments to editor@cai-india.org . We shall add it to the article or publish it separately.

Report prepared by mr. Santhanarajan, Director, Food and Drug testing, CAI,