



APOLLO GROUP TIES UP WITH GOVERNMENT TO EXPAND ITS TELEMEDICINE SERVICES BASE FOOD & PHARMA

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Apollo Hospitals Group has tied up with Common Services Centres (“CSC”), a scheme of the Union Government under the Department of Electronics and Information Technology in Delhi, to deliver healthcare to rural patients using telemedicine facilities. Apollo Hospitals has been in the realm of telemedicine services since last 13 years. Both Apollo and CSC have signed an MoU and aim to render primary and preventive healthcare to rural patients through tele consultation. This will enable rural patients to share their medical reports or radiology images with doctors and hence afford an all round investigation and an accurate diagnosis of their medical ailments.

PSA view – Telemedicine is neither defined under Indian laws nor do we have any specific legislation which governs it. However, telemedicine is increasingly been practiced in India both at domestic as well as international level. For example, the Ministry of External Affairs is implementing “Pan-African e network project” to impart tele-education and render telemedicine services to 53 countries of Africa. Secondly, a new trend to bring foreign doctors on board for telemedicine services is catching up with super specialty hospitals. Its high time when government should introduce a legal framework to regulate telemedicine.

Supreme Court guides the government on DPCO and Clinical Trials

A bench headed by Justice G S Singhvi said that the central government is being guided by market-driven forces and the current DPCO would encourage profiteering of medicine brands prescribed by doctors. The court was hearing a PIL filed by NGO, All India Drug Action Network, which contended that market based pricing is never used for any price regulatory purposes and under the new policy simple average ceiling prices are in many cases higher than the market leader price.

In another PIL filed by an NGO, Swasthya Adhikar Manch in February 2012, Supreme Court got all geared up to guide the central government for ensuring a proper mechanism on clinical trials. A bench headed by Justice R.M. Lodha made observations on the conducting of clinical trials.

PSA view – These observations by the Supreme Court suggests the apathy of the government and government agencies in firstly providing for a regulatory mechanism and secondly, wherever there is a mechanism, to enforce strictly such a mechanism to bring about the desired result for which the mechanism was set up. A lot needs to be done to ensure safe and cost effective essential drugs to the common citizen and to ensure that clinical trials are conducted by the rule book in India and subjects are appropriately taken care of or compensated.

By:

Neeraj Dubey

Mansi Airi Gambhir



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