

MBBS seats upped by 10K

MCI Clears Setting Up Of 66 Medical Colleges Across Country

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New Delhi: Aiming to improve the abysmal doctor-patient ratio in India, the Medical Council of India (MCI) has permitted an increase of nearly **10,000 MBBS seats** in medical colleges from this year.

This means, after five to six years, the country will produce an additional **10,000 doctors**, taking the yearly output to **45,000** from the present **35,000 MBBS graduates**.

MCI's Board of Governors, led by chairman Shiv Kumar Sarin, also accorded sanction for 66 new medical colleges. This was possible after MCI downsized the land requirement for starting a new medical college from the earlier stipulation of 25 acres to 10 acres. But the building size on the 10 acres need not be any smaller than the one that was permitted to be built on 25 acres.

The logic — it is difficult for organizations to find 25 acres in a township or a metropolitan city. To further increase the number of doctors available in remote and far-flung areas, the board has started discussions with the army, railways and Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) to start new medical colleges as they have vast tracts of land at their disposal.

Army authorities were open to the idea but were sceptical because of the fact that children of armed forces personnel, under law, would not be able to get any reservation in these colleges. But the MCI has come up with an attractive proposal that the army, railways and ESIC, after allowing the medical colleges to come up, could add a stipulation that the MBBS graduates would have to work a minimum number of years in their service.

The huge increase in the number of MBBS seats will obviously need a corresponding increase in faculty. To address the likely shortage of teaching staff, MCI has recommended increase in their **retirement age from the present 65 years to 70 years**.