

Health Wise

Finally, state med council takes shape

Sumitra Deb Roy | TNN

Mumbai: After 12 long years, a full-fledged Maharashtra Medical Council—the only body that patients can approach over medical irregularities and negligence—finally came into being last Saturday. So far, a single government-appointed administrator was looking into all the duties of the council, right from patient grievances to registration issues. D N Lanjewar, with his limited staff of lawyers and medical experts, used to hear cases every weekend.

Now, patients who had to wait anywhere between six and eight months for a reply from the council to their complaints can hope to get it in weeks. Insiders say that as of today, more than 500 complaints against medical practitioners and those of medical negligence are awaiting the council's attention. The Mumbai office of the Maharashtra Medical Council (MMC) itself receives more than 10-15 complaints in a month.

Eighteen members of the council—10 elected, six nominated by the government and two ex-officio members—met on Saturday and it was promptly decided that hearing a patient's grievances would top the council's agenda. A member of the council, though, said that even with speedy disposal of cases, it could take up to two years to clear the backlog of complaints. The council also looks into awarding registration to doctors and allowing them licence to practise within the state, besides being a watchdog ensuring ethical practices in the medical profession. Dr Kishor Taori, president of MMC, said, "It will also smoothen things for more than one lakh doctors in terms of registration, accreditation of courses and so on."

Dr Shivkumar Utture, member, MMC, said the council is likely to form sub-committees to deal with specific areas.

In February this year, the Medical Council of India drew up a list which showed up Maharashtra among the top five states with the poorest record of redressing patient grievances.

Those with grievances can write to 189-A, Anand Complex, second floor, Sane Guruji Marg, Arthur Road Naka, Mumbai: 400 011; or call (+91) 22 2307 2464, 22 2305 3043.

MMC Objectives

The quasi-judicial body has the power to punish erring medical practitioners

The aggrieved can seek redressal for negligence, misbehaviour, extravagant charges, inadequate medical services, unethical behaviour, self-glorification and ads

The aggrieved can approach the council before moving a consumer or any other court

MMC will question a medical person in case of complaint

The council will arrange expert advice in certain cases

It will provide registration to medical graduates

