

# Health Ministry plans to curtail powers of MCI

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**NEW DELHI:** The revised draft of the proposed National Council of Human Resources in Health (NCHRH) Bill paves the way for substantially curtailing the powers of the Medical Council of India (MCI) leaving it to deal only with licensing, continuing education and ethics.

The Bill provides for the setting up of subsidiary bodies each of which will independently perform the allocated task in governing medical education and all other functions which are being performed by the MCI at present.

It is proposed to establish a National Committee for Accreditation (NCA) and a National Medical Education and Training Board that will register and accredit medical colleges and prepare the curriculum for all streams of education in the health sector respectively.

The NCA will function as an accreditation agency pro-

posed under the National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010, introduced in the Lok Sabha in the Budget session.

## Assessment

This Bill makes provisions for assessment of academic quality of higher educational institutions, programmes conducted and their infrastructure through mandatory accreditation by independent accreditation agencies and to establish a statutory authority for the purpose.

The NCA is expected to be one such independent accreditation agency which will be recognised by the authority proposed under the Bill. The Bill had been approved earlier this year by a Group of Ministers, chaired by Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar with Health and Family Welfare Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Initially, there was resistance to keep medical education out of the purview of the

National Accreditation Regulatory Authority, but when it was explained that the Medical Council of India and related councils could be recognised by the Authority to function as accrediting agencies for medical education there was a consensus.

## Pending in Parliament

Similarly, medical education is also under the purview of the Educational Tribunals Bill and the Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, both of which were also cleared by a group of ministers (GoM) and are pending in Parliament.

The former Bill deals with settling disputes in higher educational institutions in the tribunals while the latter prevents malpractices such as donations in these institutions.

The existing councils, including medical, dental, nursing, pharmacy, Central

Council of Indian Medicine and Central Council of Homoeopathy, are proposed to be re-established with the responsibilities of registering professionally qualified persons in their respective disciplines, maintaining State and National Registers of professionals and highest standards of professional conduct and ethics among professionals. These councils will, however, have a significant representation from the States to make these federal in nature as also from other stakeholders.

The MCI general council which was dissolved in May through an ordinance that simultaneously established a Board of Governors to run the Council will cease to be in existence after a year. If the government does not come up with an alternative by then, the dissolved MCI will be automatically revived. The MCI was dissolved after its then president Ketan Desai was arrested on charges of corruption.