

MCI or state med council may register BRMS grads

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New Delhi: A medical degree in 3-1/2 years could soon be a reality with the health ministry and MCI planning a shorter medical degree for rural students.

Many rounds of discussion on the scheme have taken place between the ministry officials and MCI representatives, the last one being on November 17 under the chairmanship of health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. "At this meeting, many of the operational details were discussed and rough edges ironed out," Dr Desai said.

The ministry is backing the scheme as it is finding it increasingly difficult to get ade-

quate number of doctors to serve in rural areas to fulfil the UPA government's commitments under National Rural Health Mission-2009.

To keep Bachelor of Rural Medicine & Surgery (BRMS) graduates in the loop, MCI is also proposing a parallel mechanism to register them by state medical councils and MCI.

"Registration would be granted provisionally on an annual renewal basis and would only entitle the holders of such innovative medical qualification of 3-1/2 years to practise in a rural set-up in the same district," it said.

Dr Desai was confident that the scheme would take final

shape by March after incorporating the suggestions received during a workshop scheduled for February 4-5, 2010, where deans of all 300 medical colleges, vice-chancellors of all medical universities and directors of education of all 29 states would participate.

All this would be conveyed to a Delhi High Court Bench comprising Chief Justice A P Shah and Justice S Muralidhar on January 6 by MCI counsel Pratibha Singh. The HC is hearing a PIL filed by Dr Meenakshi Gautam complaining that the ministry and MCI were not paying enough attention to improving the rural healthcare system.