



The Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA)

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MISSION

The Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA) is the national professional body of pharmacists engaged in various facets of the profession of pharmacy. The IPA is committed to promote the highest professional and ethical standards of pharmacy, focus the image of pharmacists as competent healthcare professionals, sensitize the community, government and others on vital professional issues and support pharmaceutical education and sciences in all aspects

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IPA/110/230

April 29, 2020

President

T.V. Narayana

Shri Narendra Modiji

Hon. Prime Minister of India

South Block, Raisina Hill, New Delhi, 110 011

Immediate

Past President

Rao V.S.V. Vadlamudi

Respected Sir,

Vice Presidents

Divisional Heads

Community Pharmacy

Manjiri Gharat

Education

S. Vidyadhara

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R.N. Gupta

Industrial Pharmacy

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Regulatory Affairs

Subhash Mandal

Hon. Gen. Secretary

Suresh Khanna

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T.B. Nair

Greetings from the Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA), the premier organization of the pharmacy profession in the country, which is in existence for 80 years and is registered as a charitable trust. IPA has a membership of around 15,000 and it operates Pan India through 21 state branches and 56 local branches. IPA addresses all concerns and matters related to all facets of the pharmacy profession through its divisions which are, Community Pharmacy, Education, Hospital Pharmacy, Industrial Pharmacy, Regulatory Affairs and Students Forum. IPA's main objective is to promote the science and art of pharmacy in all aspects and impart suitable education and training to professionals working in the area of pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences. As a member of the Drug Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), IPA is actively involved in advising the Government on matters related to drugs & regulations. IPA is involved in activities aimed at improving healthcare in collaboration with international organizations like FIP, FAPA, CPA, SEARPharm Forum, WHPA and WHO. IPA also makes representations to the authorities on matters of professional and public interest and works constantly towards achieving a better and healthy India.

At the outset kindly accept our compliments and gratitude for handling the COVID-19 pandemic situation in our country very carefully to keep the spread under control. We salute you and all the frontline warriors who are contributing directly or indirectly in this war against COVID-19.

We are writing this letter to draw your urgent attention to the fact the frontline warriors involved in #IndiaFightsCorona includes pharmacists, who are healthcare professionals working in both the Government and the private sector. In the public sector, they work in RMDs, PHCs, CHCs, district and tertiary hospitals and in Central and State Drugs Control organizations. Those in the private sector work in hospitals, retail pharmacies (Chemists & Druggists) and in drugs wholesale distributors. Pharmacists and their assistant staff are risking their lives (and of their family members at home) while providing untiring services. They continue to offer their dedicated services in spite of several challenges that they face.

Unlike many private doctors, who provide either online or phone consultations to patients without physically seeing the patients, pharmacists continue to serve patients by keeping pharmacies open all days and often for long hours to enable patients to get their medicines dispensed with proper advice on proper usage of medicines. Pharmacists in many regions are also reporting data to their local health authorities about the patients with cough, cold and fever and are also keeping records and reporting data on hydroxychloroquine. Pharmacists counsel patients who visit pharmacies about self-medication like the use of mild sedatives (people are losing sleep due to stress and high anxiety under the present circumstances) and the demand for hydroxychloroquine without a prescription are some of the challenges faced by the pharmacists.



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Maintaining stocks in the pharmacy were/have been another problem since many distributors/wholesalers have been forced to reduce deliveries due to logistic issues. Also, less staff is on duty in most pharmacies due to restrictions in the current Lockdown situation.

Pharmacists working in both government and private hospitals as well as in community pharmacies come in contact with a large number of consumers/patients who may not be known COVID-19 patients at the time of their visit to pharmacies. There are cases of pharmacists getting quarantined because of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients visiting their pharmacies, which became known a few days after the patients' visit.

There are reports of deaths of 9 pharmacists in Spain, 4 in UK and 100s are quarantined, several pharmacies had to be closed. Similar reports are also being received from Italy and the USA. There has been news that in India too there are similar cases of the closedown of pharmacies.

We would like to reiterate that pharmacists and their assistant staff are frontline warriors in the war against COVID-19 and are playing a vital role in our healthcare system. We, therefore, urge you, Sir, to include them in the special package of medical insurance, which has been announced by the Government on 26th March, which gives coverage to all those health workers who have a risk of getting infected with the coronavirus. After going through the Scheme, it is not clear if retail pharmacists are included in this scheme but it appears that pharmacists are not covered under this scheme. Therefore we request you to kindly take steps to include the pharmacists working in retail and hospital sectors in this insurance scheme.

Pharmacists have remained unsung heroes since no one has made a mention about them. We request you to recognize their services, which will definitely boost their morale. Sir, in your address to the nation, please also mention "Pharmacists" along with doctors, nurses and paramedics as the healthcare warriors fighting corona, and this would immensely boost the morale of pharmacists and that would enable them to work dedicatedly to face COVID-19 as well as any other healthcare issues that our great nation might face in future and involve passionately towards building a healthy India.

IPA has been advocating for a larger role for pharmacists in Primary Health Care and National Health Programmes and has been instrumental in engaging pharmacists as DOT Providers in the RNTCP. IPA will always be available to work with GOI for any issues of healthcare and would be honoured to take up a greater role in service to the nation.

With best regards,

Suresh Khanna
National Hon. Gen. Secretary