CDSCO STRENGTHENS ENFORCEMENT AGAINST UNAUTHORIZED PROMOTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF GLP-1 BASED DRUGS

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization ("**CDSCO**") issued an advisory on March 10, 2026, ("**Advisory**") cautioning pharmaceutical companies from engaging in direct or indirect promotional activities in relation to GLP-1 receptor agonists used for obesity and metabolic disorders and other prescription medicines. The Advisory reiterates that such prescription drugs are intended to be prescribed only by Registered Medical Practitioners or specialists and must be used strictly in accordance with their approved indications and conditions of approval under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the Drugs Rules, 1945. It further states that any form of advertisement, whether direct or indirect, which promotes prescription-only medicines to the general public, exaggerates therapeutic efficacy, suggests assured or guaranteed weight-loss outcomes, downplays lifestyle modification measures such as diet, exercise and behavioural interventions or induces demand for pharmacological therapy may constitute as misleading promotion of prescription drugs and could invite regulatory action under the Drugs Rules, 1945.

In connection with the Advisory, CDSCO has released a public notice bearing reference no. F. No. Enforc-11021(11)/34/2026-eoffice-Part(1) on May 18, 2026, ("**Notice**") regarding CDSCO strengthening enforcement against unauthorized promotion and distribution of GLP-1 based drugs.

The Notice states that CDSCO has conducted a nationwide enforcement drive to curb illegal distribution channels, noncompliant dispensing practices, and misuse of GLP-1-based weight loss drugs by performing audits and inspections across online pharmacy warehouses, drug wholesalers, retail outlets, and wellness and slimming clinics.

The Notice further requests State and Union Territory Drug Controllers to strengthen monitoring of the end to end supply chain of the GLP-1-based weight loss drugs to ensure strict adherence to the conditions of approval and the warnings on the label by ensuring that manufacture/import, distribution, retail/wholesale sales, and dispensing occur only through authorized channels and strictly in line with approved indications and labelling. Moreover, the Notice notes that any diversion, leakage into unauthorized channels, promotions influencing supply practices, or non-adherence to approval conditions should be viewed seriously with appropriate regulatory action.

Additionally, all State and Union Territory Drug Controllers have been requested to actively monitor print, electronic, digital, social-media, and outdoor platforms for non-compliant advertisements or surrogate promotional activities relating to these drugs. The Notice states that appropriate action should be initiated under the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and rules made thereunder against manufacturers, importers, marketers, or any other entities found in violation. Moreover, where required, coordination with the Advertising Standards Council of India and other relevant agencies may be undertaken for effective enforcement.

Read more at:
https://cdsco.gov.in/opencms/opencms/system/modules/CDSCO.WEB/elements/download_file_division.jsp?num_id=MTQxNzE=

This update is only for general informational purposes and shall not be construed to constitute legal advice (which can only be given after being formally engaged and familiarizing ourselves with all the relevant facts). Should you have any queries, or require any assistance or clarifications with regard to anything contained in this newsletter, please feel free to contact our partner, Mr. Pradnesh Warke

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