

# Painless access to narcotic drugs cheers palliative care community

Rema Nagarajan  
@timesgroup.com

Five essential narcotic drugs (END) will now be made available to registered medical institutions on a single licence issued by the state drug controller's office. This has put an end to a situation where opioids were inaccessible for pain management and palliative care for patients because six different licences were needed to be allowed to procure, stock and prescribe them.

This has been made possible by the gazetting of the rules for implementing the amendment to the NDPS Act passed on the last day of the last session of Parliament in the UPA's tenure. With the amendment, the licensing



**New norms put an end to the situation where opioids were inaccessible for pain management and palliative care for patients because six different licences were needed to be allowed to buy, stock and prescribe them**

power was transferred to a single authority, the state food and drug administration, and the power to regulate and frame rules was vested with the Drug Controller General of India. Since then the palliative care community had been waiting for the rules to be framed.

The rules provide a list of the five essential narcotic drugs — morphine, codeine and ethyl morphine, oxy-co-

done, hydro-codone and Fentanyl — and their salts. Now all states will have to create a single-licence system with the state drug controller empowered to issue it.

"The palliative care community is absolutely delighted. We have been waiting for so long for this. We hope these amended rules will make an enormous difference in making opioids easily available for palliative care," said Dr

Nagesh Simha, president of the Indian Association of Palliative Care. "Till now the law was all about misuse of these opioids. But you cannot deprive somebody of pain relief because you are worried about misuse," he added.

Chairperson of the NDPS sub-committee of the Indian Drug Manufacturers Association (IDMA), Devesh Malladi, said that the rules were well-framed as the government had consulted all stakeholders from palliative care groups to industry and trade. "For this to be a success, the government has to amend the law to make a distinction between illicit drug traffickers and legitimate entities," said Malladi.

For the full report, log on to [www.timesofindia.com](http://www.timesofindia.com)

4/6  
JS (SP) 1

DFR (A.C.C.)

9/6

Committee (VET)

TD, NIC

10-6-15

Regulatory