

THE ALLIED AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS BILL, 2018

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

- The Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018 was introduced in Rajya Sabha by the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Mr. Jagat Prakash Nadda on December 31, 2018. The Bill seeks to regulate and standardise the education and practice of allied and healthcare professionals.
- **Allied health professional:** The Bill defines ‘allied health professional’ as an associate, technician, or technologist trained to support the diagnosis and treatment of any illness, disease, injury, or impairment. Such a professional is trained to support the implementation of any healthcare treatment recommended by a medical, nursing or any other healthcare professional. An allied health professional should obtain a diploma or degree, with a duration of at least 2,000 hours.
- **Healthcare professional:** As per the Bill, a ‘healthcare professional’ includes a scientist, therapist, or any other professional who studies, advises, researches, or provides preventive, curative, rehabilitative, therapeutic, or promotional health services. A healthcare professional should obtain a degree, with a duration of at least 3,600 hours.
- **Allied and healthcare professions:** The Bill specifies certain recognised categories of allied and healthcare professions in the Schedule. These include life science professionals, surgical and anaesthesia related technology professionals, trauma and burn care professionals, physiotherapists, and nutrition science professionals. The central government may amend this Schedule after consultation with the Allied and Healthcare Council.
- **Allied and Healthcare Council of India:** The Bill sets up the Allied and Healthcare Council of India. The Council will consist of **48[*]** members, including: (i) six members (at the level of Joint Secretary) representing various Departments/ Ministries of the central government, (ii) one representative from the Directorate General of Health Services, (iii) two Directors or Medical Superintendents appointed on a rotational basis from amongst medical institutions including the AIIMS, Delhi and JIPMER, Puducherry, (iv) three members appointed on a rotational basis from various Councils such as the Indian Nursing Council, and the Medical Council of India, and (v) 12 members representing State Councils.
- **Functions of the Allied and Healthcare Council:** Functions of the Council include: (i) framing policies for regulating the education and practice of allied and healthcare professionals, (ii) maintaining a Central Register of all registered allied and healthcare professionals, (iii) providing minimum standards of education, courses, maximum tuition fee, and proportionate distribution of seats, and (iv) providing for a uniform entrance and exit examination for the allied and healthcare professionals.

- **State Allied and Healthcare Councils:** Within six months from the passage of the Bill, state governments will constitute State Allied and Healthcare Councils. The State Councils will consist of 29 members, including: (i) one member representing medical sciences in the state government, (ii) two members representing state medical colleges, (iii) two members representing charitable institutions, and (iv) 20 members from recognised categories of allied and healthcare professions, nominated by the state government.
- Functions of State Councils include: (i) enforcing professional conduct and code of ethics to be observed by allied healthcare professionals, (ii) maintaining respective State Registers, (iii) registering and inspecting allied and healthcare institutions, and (iv) ensuring uniform entry and exit examinations.
- **Establishment of new institutions:** The Bill states that: (i) if any person wishes to establish an allied and healthcare institution, or (ii) if an established allied and healthcare institution wants to open new courses, or increase its admission capacity, or admit a new batch of students, it will have to seek prior permission from the Council. If the person or allied healthcare institution fails to seek such permission, then any qualification granted to a student from such an institution will not be recognised under the Bill.
- The respective State Councils will verify the standards of any allied and healthcare institution where education in the recognised categories is being imparted. If these institutions do not conform to the standards specified by the Council, the State Council may withdraw recognition granted to them.
- **Offences and penalties:** No person is allowed to practice as a qualified allied and healthcare practitioner other than those enrolled in a State Register or the National Register. Any person who contravenes this provision will be punished with a fine of one lakh rupees.

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[*]This document was corrected for typos on January 8, 2019.

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