Gujarat Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has developed software that would enable the FDA to send short messaging services (SMS) to all pharmacists in the state on non-standard drugs and banned drugs. If this happens, then the state FDA would be the first to provide warning alerts through SMS in the country.

H G Khosia, commissioner of Gujarat’s FDA said: “The software was developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC), drawing expertise from FDA staffers to design and conceptualise the software.” The state drug regulator had already done the trial run and shortly the SMS service would be rolled out,” he said adding that currently the FDA office is negotiating with telecom service provider for executing the SMS Service.

The FDA office had approached some of the telecom operators in the state and will select those operators who have larger market share and provide good services. Interestingly there is no other state FDA in the country to have such a system in place, which would disseminate life saving information about non-standard drugs or banned drugs to the pharmacist.

Explaining the current system Mr. Khosia told ET: “After random inspection of drug sample at chemist shop, it takes nearly 30 days or more to inform the pharmacist regarding any discrepancy in the drug.” According to him, once FDA officials conduct random inspections and send samples for testing at Vadodara testing laboratory, it takes more than two weeks and another 10 days within the department to reach him as other officials have to make necessary official records of the same. “By the time I issue the orders, the drugs are already consumed,” he adds. There are 28,000 licensed whole-seller, retailer and pharmacists in the state.

As the Gujarat’s drug department had already started modernising itself from the last year, almost all the data regarding pharmacist are available in software format, even it’s testing laboratories and other departments offices across the state had already been upgraded to modern systems as well as connected through web based application. “People find it more comfortable to access information on mobile, compared to postal messages or email,” he said.