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Russia Mulls Lifting Medical Advertisement Ban

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In the spring of 2013, Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova suggested a blanket ban on advertising pharmaceuticals and medical services in all media.

The Russian parliament may pass a law lifting a ban on media advertising medical services and equipment, which was imposed at the start of 2014. The media market may welcome this initiative, as it could boost revenues.

The Duma Economic Policy, Innovative Development and Entrepreneurship Committee has recommended that the lower parliament house approve the necessary amendments to the law on advertising. The Federal Anti-Monopoly Service has also supported the changes.

Only specialized media are allowed to publish medical advertisements. They can also be freely distributed at medical conferences, pharmaceutical seminars and other similar events. But since the beginning of 2014 medical companies have not been even allowed to specify what kind of services they provide.

"There was a response to the growing number of dishonest advertisements of various miraculous medical devices," Victor Zvagelsky, the head of the Duma State Regulation of Excise Goods and Advertisement Committee said, Gazeta.ru reported. As hospitals and medical centers could not advertise their services, all types of swindlers have flooded the market.

In the spring of 2013, Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova suggested a blanket ban on advertising pharmaceuticals and medical services in all media. But then patients would have no way of getting any information about authentic drugs.

Since a ban on advertising alcohol was imposed for online and print media at the start of 2013 the volume of advertisements in print media fell by 10 percent last year, slashing their profits by about 2.5 billion rubles ($70 million), according to the Russian Association of Communication Agencies, or AKAR.

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