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Urgent need to address shortage of critical anti-TB drugs

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SATB requests for a public statement outlining the Ministry's actions to address the crisis of anti-TB drugs shortage



Survivors Against TB (SATB), a collective of tuberculosis (TB) survivors, experts, and advocates, has written to Mansukh Mandaviya, the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, to address the alarming shortage of vital anti-TB drugs across different parts of the country.

Reports have surfaced indicating a severe shortage of essential anti-TB medications, including Linezolid, Clofazimine, and Cycloserine, in government hospitals and private pharmacies in Mumbai, Uttar Pradesh, and potentially other states. This crisis, initially brought to light by patient advocates and news reports, is raising concerns about a possible nationwide crisis affecting TB patients' access to crucial medications.

These medications are critical components of TB treatment regimens, especially for Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR TB). The reported shortage, observed since June 2023, has the potential to endanger the health and well-being of patients who rely on these medications for their TB treatment.

To address this crisis, SATB is requesting the the Ministry to conduct a comprehensive national investigation into the drug shortages and the distribution of drugs nearing their expiry date; ensure the rapid procurement and distribution of Linezolid, Clofazimine, and Cycloserine to government hospitals and private pharmacies.

There is also a need to establish a robust mechanism for drug forecasting to prevent future shortages and ensure a continuous supply of essential anti-TB medications.