



The Delhi Network of Positive People

To

**Dr. Sunil Khaparde,
DDG TB-Central TB Division (CTD)
Ministry of Health & family Welfare
Nirman Bhawan**

Dated: 10-June-2016

Subject: DNP+ concerns for TB treatment.

Dear Sir

Greetings from *the Delhi Network of Positive people (DNP+)*

DNP+ is a network that has been working with and for people living with HIV (PLHIV). As part of our work, we have been working with HIV-TB co-infected people as well in Delhi and finding it challenging to access treatment for tuberculosis in the program. In specific, we would like to share the following concerns and demands:

- 1) *Make Caps Rifabutin available for PLHIV co-infected with HIV and on 2nd line ARV -* For years, PLHIVs have find it difficult to access Rifabutin – drug replaced by Rifampicin for the treatment of drug sensitive TB treatment for HIV positives. Though CTD has assured us of its availability in adequate quantity, however, till date the ground story is different. Further, DOTS Centre staffs need to be trained on TB drugs administration for HIV-TB co-infected patients as most of them are completely ignorant of need of Rifabutin.
- 2) *Resolve mismanagement of tender and procurement issues; and ensure a good supply chain for TB drugs with appropriate monitoring system –* Daily FDC treatment regimen promised for HIV positive people and children two years back is yet to be rolled out.
- 3) *Install and run the GeneXpert machines already available at the hospitals –* India now has more than 600 GeneXpert machines for screening of drug resistant TB. As per the guidelines, GeneXpert testing was to be made available as upfront screening test for TB for HIV positive people. However, Eg: Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar hospital in Delhi has the GeneXpert machine since April but tests are not being done there yet. The government should also ask Cepheid to conduct studies that expand the use of GeneXpert devices to screen for not just rifampicin resistance, but also isoniazid (INH) resistance. Use of GeneXpert devices to also detect resistance to INH will be extremely valuable in India. GeneXpert as platform need also to be explored for other diagnostic tests including HIV and HCV viral load tests. As by using different cartridges this machine can be used for **MTB/RIF, HIV Viral Load &**



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HCV Viral Load diagnostics, the health ministry should further investigate whether GeneXpert can be utilized by other programs and ensure its efficient use.

- 4) *Ensure counselling at DOTS centre for treatment adherence* – From our experience of working with HIV treatment program, counselling plays a key role in ensuring adherence to treatment among the patients. Lack of counselling continues to result in treatment failures and development of drug resistant TB in lot of cases in India.

As CTD strives to adapt more patient centered model, we really hope that our demands and concerns would be considered by the program.

Should in case you need more information regarding our concerns, please let us know. We would be happy to provide you more information and be your **watchdogs** on the ground to give you real time information for **smooth implementation of the TB program**.

Thanking You

Yours Sincerely,

Paul Lhungdim
President



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