

To  
The Hon'ble Minister of Health and Family Welfare  
Government of Delhi

CC: Principal Secretary Health & Family Welfare,  
Government of Delhi



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**Subject:** Barriers in accessing blood requirements during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown

Dear Sir,

We are a voluntary group of health professionals and citizens who are facilitating access to health care for patients during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown in Delhi. This letter seeks to draw your attention to a particular concern regarding access to blood for patients at government hospitals that we have repeatedly faced.

1. Over the past week, we have dealt with several cases in which **patients in need of blood were asked to provide replacement blood donations to the hospital's blood bank**. In these cases, identifying and transporting blood donors to hospitals proved to be a particular challenge and precious hours were lost in resolving the need.
2. There was also an incident where a Delhi government hospital allowed **admission of a pregnant woman only after her family provided replacement blood**. The family had to incur **out of pocket expenditure** even while donating blood to the blood bank.
3. There have been barriers where **State government hospitals are not readily accepting donor cards issued by Delhi government hospitals**.
4. While we recognize that blood banks are facing blood shortages, insisting on replacement donations at this time is not feasible. **Given the situation of a pandemic, transporting donors to a hospital, thereby exposing them to the risk of infection is neither just nor prudent from the perspective of epidemic control**. Further, the National Blood Policy, 2007 has specifically called for replacement transfusions to be gradually phased out in order to achieve a 100% voluntary non-remunerated blood donation programme.

**In this scenario, with the intention of responding promptly to the blood requirements of patients, as well as minimizing additional risk of exposure to the virus for donors, we request the following:**

1. In order to ensure that voluntary blood donation takes place and blood banks are adequately replenished, **regular mobile blood donation camps** must be organized by the Government

