



The Hon. Dr Pakishe Aaron Motsoaledi  
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Dear Honourable Minister Motsoaledi

**RE: Tenofovir and Abacavir drug shortages**

On behalf of the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society, I am writing to request an explanation from the Department of Health as to why many public sector sites are reporting a shortage of the antiretrovirals (ARVs) tenofovir (TDF) and abacavir (ABC). We are sure that the Department of Health is as concerned about any possible treatment interruptions as we are. We suggest that as soon as possible, a memo be circulated to all clinicians at antiretroviral treatment (ART) sites which will guide them as to how to handle this situation. In a spirit of partnership, we have drafted such a guideline for your perusal. We have polled a number of HIV clinicians to develop a consensus statement.

We also request that an urgent investigation into the reasons as to why there are these critical drug shortages. Such stock outs dent public confidence in the ARV program and threaten patients' commitment to life-long adherence. Stock-outs also jeopardize the efficacy of our 1<sup>st</sup> line ARV regimen, triggering emergence of HIV drug-resistance and unnecessarily increasing demand for more expensive and unpleasant 2<sup>nd</sup> line therapy. It is regrettable that the good outcomes of South Africa's ART program are being undermined by inadequate drug stocks at a time of rapid expansion.

Sincerely,

Dr Francesca Conradie  
President: Southern African HIV Clinicians Society

Enclosure: Guidance to Clinicians Experiencing Tenofovir and Abacavir Drug Shortages

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