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## Statement of Concern regarding Corruption in Medical Education

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We at Equitable Healthcare Access Consortium (EHAC), a consortium of healthcare organisations and individual practitioners committed to ethical and equitable healthcare in India, wish to express deep concern over the recent First Information Report (FIR) filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) [1] and subsequent report that appeared in The Lancet [2]. The FIR implicates officials from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, external assessors of the National Medical Commission (NMC), doctors affiliated with private medical colleges, and various intermediaries and administrators.

The CBI investigation has exposed a disturbing network of corruption involving government officials, medical college owners, assessors, and intermediaries. This network has facilitated unethical practices such as:

- Sharing and soliciting classified information
- Arranging for “ghost faculty”
- Extending and receiving undue favours

These actions have enabled several private medical colleges across India to fraudulently secure accreditation from the NMC.

Such practices undermine the integrity of medical education and jeopardise the future of medical students. Institutions that fail to meet educational standards, engage in corrupt activities, and lack qualified faculty cannot be considered legitimate centres of learning. Graduates from these colleges may lack the moral, ethical, and technical grounding necessary to serve the healthcare needs of the nation.

India deserves better. The rapid expansion of private medical colleges was intended to address the shortage of doctors,

especially in rural and underserved areas. However, if these institutions continue to operate under unethical frameworks, they cannot be trusted to produce competent, ethical, and responsive healthcare professionals.

## We urge the National Medical Commission (NMC) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) to:

1. **Initiate a time-bound and impartial investigation** into the corruption within these institutions. The investigation team should include doctors and healthcare administrators with impeccable academic, ethical, and administrative credentials.
2. **Develop and implement a transparent reform plan** to eliminate corruption from medical education. This plan must be time-bound and publicly accessible.
3. **Institute outcome-based (instead of input based) standards and assessment:** NMC accreditation criteria is based largely on building infrastructure, room sizes, equipment, faculty, etc. While these are important for a new medical academic institution; assessing the “outcomes” or calibre of graduating students and holding the institutions accountable is what will enhance the quality of medical education.

## We also call upon professional associations and academies of healthcare professionals to:

1. Issue advisories to revoke the memberships of doctors found guilty of unethical practices.
2. Encourage members to actively report corruption and refrain from complicity or silence.

The future of India’s healthcare system depends on the integrity of its medical education. We must act decisively to restore trust and uphold the standards that every Indian citizen deserves.

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