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Sarvatrika Arogya Andolana - Karnataka (SAA-K)
(A people's campaign for Universal Health Systems)

Shri Dinesh Gundu Rao
Honorable Minister of Health and Family Welfare
Government of Karnataka

26 February 2026

Subject: Recommendations for a Comprehensive Right to Health Act for Karnataka

Respected Sir,

We commend the Government of Karnataka for its progressive step in drafting **The Karnataka Right to Health and Emergency Medical Service Bill, 2025**. However, the draft requires extensive improvement to truly realize a rights-based health framework. The entitlements it defines are very vague and the accountability provisions are very weak. We urge the following modifications.

1. Integration of Social Determinants and Public Health

- **Enact a Public Health Act:** Karnataka lacks a legislative framework for the prevention of communicable diseases and outbreak notification. We urge the government to integrate Public Health Act provisions – similar to 2009 Gujarat or separate one like Tamil Nadu – to address social determinants like water, nutrition, and sanitation.

2. Operationalizing the Right to Health Care

- **Universal Health System:** The Act should bring all public and private providers under a unified Universal Health System to ensure seamless, dignity-based care.
- **Free medicines, diagnostics and treatment in public facilities with complete removal of user fees:** Access to health must not depend on the ability to pay. The Act should guarantee free treatment, diagnostics, and quality medicines at all public facilities.
- **Community Participation and Redressal:** Residents must be empowered as active participants in planning and design, supported by robust grievance redressal mechanisms.
- **Justiciability:** To be a true "Right," denials of care must be made **justiciable** in court.

3. Effective Regulation of the Private Sector

- **Beyond Licensing:** The current draft is largely silent on private sector regulation. While the KPME Act exists, it is primarily for licensing.
- **Autonomous Regulatory Body:** Following the Vision Committee of Karnataka report, we recommend establishing an autonomous regulatory body to oversee costs, quality, and the implementation of such measures as standard treatment guidelines.

We believe the **2009 National Right to Health Bill** can serve as a foundational blueprint that Karnataka can adapt to create an exemplary legislative template for the nation.

We attach a summary framework for a Right to Health Act, drawn from various bills across the country. *We urge the Ministry to hold inclusive public consultations and revise the draft thoroughly before tabling it in the Assembly.* We would be happy to engage with the health department in a constructive manner and support the Ministry in refining this landmark endeavour.

Yours sincerely,

For Sarvatrika Arogya Andolana Karnataka

CC:

Ms. Uma Mahadevan, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka.

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