



Press Release

School children urge Health Minister to issue Health Advisory on Air Pollution

Delhi's air quality continues to be at dangerous level, no action from the Government on health advisory

Delhi, Feb 16, 2017: Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED) along with its student volunteers met the Health Minister of Delhi, Shri Satyendra Kumar Jain at his residence during the Janta Darbar on Thursday. Children from various schools in Delhi urged the minister to issue health advisories in each of the wards of the city. This meeting is a follow-up of a previous meeting held in August 2016, when these children along with CEED representatives met the minister, and handed him petitions of over 100,000 citizens who demand the issuance of health advisories for the people of Delhi (1).

Dimpy Suneja, Programme Officer at CEED elaborated that “The health advisory will inform the public about the existing air quality of the area, and shall also help the people to reduce their exposure during severe air pollution days. It is important for the residents to know what they are breathing, and make informed choices.” Mr. Suneja further added that “While several actions need to be taken to curb pollution levels and the exposure to this toxic air, the first step towards this should be to inform the residents of the preventive measures to mitigate health risks.”

Over the last month, CEED has continued the #HelpDelhiBreathe campaign and managed to reach out to another 100,000 people in Delhi through online and offline outreach activities including community dialogue and community engagement across Delhi (2). A community dialogue arranged at Ghazipur landfill area on February 5th raised an overall concern on the miserable situation of the residents in the region along with decreased immunity among children due to poor air quality (3).

Deepu, a student volunteer of the Campaign said that “The Government of Delhi took several steps immediately after the Diwali smog. However, no initiative was taken to inform the citizens of Delhi on the measures or precautions that we should take on days when air pollution is very high. Such information is very useful for students like us, as well as for the sick and the elderly. I hope our Health Minister takes immediate steps in this direction and help us to keep the people of Delhi informed. Clean air is our basic right.”

Responding to the plea of the school children, Health Minister, Shri Satyendra Kumar Jain ensured the installation of 15 new monitoring stations in Delhi within the next two months. The minister also appreciated CEED's initiative and acknowledged that the diligence of the school children along with CEED has encouraged the government to work towards the impending issue. The Health Minister has also asked CEED to send him a formal letter that elaborates on the element of health advisory. He has assured to work on the health advisory and issue the same.

CEED under the #HelpDelhiBreathe Campaign, has been carrying out various awareness activities and outreach events across Delhi since May 2016. The agenda of the campaign was to aware people about the health risks involved with air pollution; and urge the Health Minister to issue health advisory across all the wards of Delhi, in order to keep the people informed about the air quality and respective measures to be taken around the same.

Note to Editor

1. These children were assured by the minister that the government of Delhi will take immediate measures to curb the pollution levels and shall issue health advisories extensively. However, winter season is almost over and the city has suffered from some severe pollution days in the months of November and December, but issuance of health advisory remains in limbo. URL for the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oR_U1swfbWc&feature=youtu.be
2. CEED carried out an extensive outreach activity all across Delhi and interviewed various vulnerable groups about the health risks they have encountered due to the growing air pollution levels in the city. URL for the video :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSHbHRLpy64>
3. <http://m.navodayatimes.in/news/delhi-ncr/in-a-area-of-ghazipur-air-pollution-situation-is-serious/30832/>

Contact:

- Abhishek Chanchal, Media Officer - akchanchal@ceedindia.org ; 08010398945
- Dimpy Suneja, Programme Officer-Clean Air - dimpysuneja@ceedindia.org ; 09013228624