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*My life depends on me
getting the medication I
need. I can't tell you how
scared I feel right now.*



<Salutation>, supplies of mental health medication in Malawi are at an all-time low, placing thousands of people at risk. Will you please send an urgent gift so that patients with mental health conditions can continue receiving desperately-needed treatment?

April 2023

Dear <Salutation>,

This is a letter I hoped I'd never have to write.

But there's a very real chance that patients like me will no longer have access to the mental health treatment we need just to live our lives.

My name is Shida. I'm a nurse. I'm also a mental health patient.

In 2011, I was diagnosed with a major depressive disorder and through Saint John of God, I was started on medication that I can honestly say saved my life.

But today, supplies of mental health medication in Malawi are at an all-time low and 16,000 people like me face losing access to vital treatment.

Will you please help?

<Salutation>, will you please send an urgent gift to help fund the purchase of desperately-needed mental health medication that will otherwise run out this year?

My mental health story started when the father of my child walked out on me just after our son was born. Suddenly, I was alone, with a new-born baby to look after, and a broken heart. The stress was unbearable.

I sank into a deep depression. The decline in my mental health plunged me into a very dark place, <Salutation>.

I stopped talking. If someone spoke to me, I struggled to answer. Then I stopped going to work. Eventually, I stopped leaving the house.



Shortly after, I attempted suicide.

My sister and brother tried to take care of me, but my rapidly deteriorating mental health took its toll on them too.

Then, one day, a friend recommended Saint John of God mental health services. I still remember her words.

“It’s the best hospital in Malawi for counselling patients with mental illness.”

At Saint John of God, the staff explained that they don’t start people on medical treatment without admitting them for observation. I was admitted for three weeks.

Those three weeks changed my life.

I was treated with dignity and respect and given a comprehensive assessment so that treatment could be tailored to my needs. I was started on medication that transformed my mental health and allowed me to function again.

I've said it before and I'll say it again. That medication saved my life.

<Salutation>, Malawi is now running out of mental health medication. I'm terrified of going back to that dark place. Will you please send a gift today so that patients like me can continue getting the treatment we need?

Having access to the treatment I need has allowed me to become a valued professional who contributes to society. Instead of relying on my family members, if they need help, I can now provide it. I can perform at work to the best of my ability.



Not only that, but receiving the right mental health treatment has allowed me to take my studies further. I've upgraded my diploma in Nursing Midwifery to a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Management.

I am living.

The right medication not only saved my life, it transformed it. And I know I'm not alone in that.

<Salutation>, the situation we find ourselves in now is nothing short of an emergency. And the fear of what lies ahead keeps me awake at night.

I'm appealing to you to take urgent action now on behalf of 16,000 mental health patients whose lives hang in the balance. Your gift of will help provide vulnerable people like me with the ongoing treatment we desperately need.

It breaks my heart to think about the number of people who will be affected if Malawi runs out of mental health medication. Our government only allocates 1.5% of its budget to mental health and right now, we need €200,000 to supply thousands of people with the medication they rely on.

If the unthinkable happens, and existing supplies are used up and not replenished, countless people will suffer. Not just mental health patients but their loved ones too.

I know this first-hand.

There was a time when my medication was temporarily unavailable in Malawi and I was started on a replacement. I had a severe reaction to the new medication and became very ill. I very nearly relapsed.

I think about the number of people in Malawi who are seriously ill, whose conditions are even more serious than mine. These people, many of whom live in extreme poverty, will be among the worst affected.

Mental health medication is extremely costly; many of the country's hospitals can't even afford to purchase it. Patients like me have no hope of being able to buy it ourselves.

<Salutation>, it's your compassion and generosity that means countless people like me can get the support we need through Saint John of God mental health services. The lives of some of the most vulnerable members of our society have been saved thanks to your past support.

I've written this letter to appeal to your generosity once more and urge you to please act now. Please send an urgent gift of so that mental health patients in Malawi can continue receiving the medication they desperately need.

The alternative doesn't bear thinking about.

Please. We are counting on you.

Thank you for your compassion during this crisis.



P.S. <Salutation>, if critically-low supplies of medication in Malawi are not replaced, thousands of mental health patients' lives are at risk. These people have nowhere else to turn. Will you please send an urgent gift of to help fund the purchase of vital treatment now?

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