

Mexican Doctors March for Public Health, Against Privatization



Mexico City, October 25 (RHC)-- Doctors and other health sector workers are scheduled to take to the streets in more than 70 cities across Mexico next Sunday in a day of action to protest the federal government's mismanagement of the public health system and to demand better working conditions.

The marches, which coincide with National Doctors Day in Mexico, were called by the June 22nd Doctors' Movement and focus on a series of health workers' demands made to the Ministry of Health.

First, the demonstrators articulated a "complete rejection" of the federal government's health reform, which critics describe as a neoliberal attack intended, ultimately, to commercialize the public health care systems, local media reported.

"Health is a right, not a business!" the National Assembly of the Front of Operative Health Sector Workers wrote in a recent statement announcing the march, adding that the national day of action aims to bring together all groups fighting for "the defense of the public health care system, social security and the right to health of the people of Mexico."

Other demands are for an end to the criminalization of doctors and union activities, a pay increase for doctors' and interns, an end to the "dismantling" of social security and both better working conditions and improvements in patient care, including the scheduling of a registered physician on each hospital floor and shorter work hours.

Protesting doctors have also raised alarm over reductions in annual federal health funding in President Enrique Peña Nieto's 2017 budget. According to Mexico's Animal Politico, the country's Ministry of Health will suffer a 7.8 percent cut in funding next year, which doctors fear will impact the care they are able to provide to patients.

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