

# *Chile's Communist mayor to import Cuban meds to fight COVID-19*

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Santiago de Chile, March 18 (RHC)-- The mayor of the Chilean municipality of Recoleta --Daniel Jadue -- has announced that through the People's Pharmacies initiative they will begin importing Cuban medicine in order to help patients infected with the novel coronavirus.

The mayor of the barrio of Santiago de Cuba said: "We started import procedures for Interferon 2b, a Cuban medicine used successfully in China and Spain. This will be for high-risk infected people." The Chilean Communist Party official pointed out that this will be done in cooperation with the Association of Municipalities with Popular Pharmacies (AChifarp).

In 2015, Jadue implemented the People's Pharmacy -- a series of government-run pharmacies with very accessible prices -- in the Recoleta neighborhood. The program was initiated in response to private pharmacy chains that were ratcheting up the price of medicines and colluding in the process, making it nearly impossible for the average person to afford medicine. The program has since spread to over 100 municipalities in the country, including Chile's largest cities.

The Recombinant Human Interferon Alpha 2B, produced in Cuba, as well as another group of medications, are part of the protocol to care for patients with this disease and any complications that may arise. The island has been supplying the drug, which is produced with Cuban technology at the Changchun Heber Biological Technology joint venture, located in Jilin, China.

It is currently used in vulnerable and health care personnel as a preventive measure, as well as in patients with COVID-19 in the form of a nebulization, as it is a quick route to reach the lungs and act in the early stages of the infection, as officials highlighted earlier this week.

In previous outbreaks of the coronavirus, SARS in 2002 and MERS in 2012, interferons were also being used for the care and treatment of infected people. Later published studies showed that these viruses, instead of inducing the creation of interferon in the body, decrease the production of these molecules, hence the effectiveness of the drug in treating COVID-19.

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