



HEALTH-INFO

CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

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MORE STAFF AND MONEY FOR HEALTH! DOWN WITH THE ARMAMENT - STOP WAR POLITICS!

Tens of thousands of people have already been infected with the coronavirus in Germany, and the number of those who have to be treated in hospital or even in an intensive care unit continues to rise. The virus is already dangerous as such, as it is more contagious than a normal flu, and spreads very fast. The measures taken by the Federal Government are aimed at getting German capital through the crisis as well as possible. In the shadow of the crisis, the state of emergency, including the deployment of the German Armed Forces inside the country, is being practiced. Basic democratic rights are being suspended.

The current crisis demonstrates that this system is not able to solve the problems. While medical personnel are urgently needed, it is not possible to provide colleagues with adequate protective clothing and to test them on a daily basis to prevent further infections. While hospital beds are desperately needed, private clinics announce short-time work for fear of losing profits, or they occupy beds with

operations scheduled in advance. While hygiene must be the top priority, cleaning work is reduced to a minimum. The virus hits a health care system that has been systematically and purposefully subjected to capitalist market logic in recent decades.



Even under normal circumstances, there was a lack of personnel in the German health care system. After the introduction of flat rates per case in 2002, 33,000 jobs in nursing care were cut within three years, many public hospitals were privatized, cleaning and transport services were outsourced. More hospital beds and more ventilators

alone are not enough; we need colleagues who can operate them and take care of the patients. The intensive care medical societies have already presented recommendations for so-called triage, according to which it should be determined who is still to be cared for, and who is not. As always, the elderly, the poor and those on the brink of society will be hit hardest.

What is needed now is the targeted and planned use of existing resources, be it money, production facilities, and – most importantly – personnel, in order to counter the looming supply crisis in the healthcare sector.

The laws presented by Health Minister Spahn are not designed to solve these problems. The principle of case-based lump sums is maintained. Clinics will receive financial incentives in the form of an increased nursing care budget in order to recruit more staff. They are not obliged to hire staff, however, nor do they have to prove at the end of the year that they have spent the money on staff.

The suspension of quality control in nursing homes, combined with the ban on visits by relatives, is leading to uncontrollable conditions in nursing homes. In Wolfsburg, no less than 15 people had to die in a Diakonie nursing home before testing and quarantine measures were even implemented.

We demand:

- More personnel in hospitals and nursing homes! Higher wages for hospital employees – not only in times of this crisis! Immediate payment of a pandemic supplement as a first step.

- Immediate abolition of the lump-sum-per-case payment, and reintroduction of the principle of full cost recovery! Revocation of privatizations! No profit with health!

- Implementation of all necessary protective measures for employees in the medical sector, hygiene training for the entire staff, including cleaning staff, drivers, and therapists.

- Immediate reintroduction of quality controls in the nursing homes! Tests for relatives of nursing home residents and seriously ill persons! Visiting permission in case of negative testing!

- Confiscation of private clinics in case of registration of short-time work, state-ordered stop of all avoidable scheduled operations!

- Confiscation of protective material from non-essential businesses;
- State intervention to convert to the production of goods now required.

- Lift all international sanctions to combat the pandemic!

- Down with the armament! Away with NATO's 2% target!

- More money for the health service!

The Federal Government's policy in the face of the crisis demonstrates its cynicism. Although the coronavirus pandemic has halted the war maneuver "Defender 2020", the German Armed Forces' missions abroad will continue. Nor will the sanctions against countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, and Syria be lifted. This prevents an effective fight against the pandemic. The response to China's offers of help is only hesitant. On the contrary, China's help and the pooling of all efforts to develop medicines and vaccines are urgently needed. In this respect too, the principle of capitalist competition is proving counterproductive in terms of solving the problems.

We demand:

- Rejection of NATO's 2% spending target! Get out of NATO, and down with the armament! Instead, increase the health budget!

- Using the resources of the German Armed Forces to fight the epidemic under civilian leadership! Opening of the Bundeswehr's medical depots!

- Pooling of all capacities and international cooperation to develop drugs and a vaccine!

- Immediate acceptance of the offers of help from China! International solidarity instead of competition!

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Sozialistische Wochenzeitung
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We continue to write – also on the subject of health – where other media have long been silent.

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