

Deputy Proposes Ban on Medical Treatment Abroad for Russian Officials

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State Duma lawmaker Vladimir Fedotkin Proposes ban on medical treatment abroad for Russian officials.

A Communist lawmaker wants to ban government officials from getting medical treatment abroad to encourage them to improve Russia's health service, a news report said Thursday.

"I am aware that officials have a lot of money and they can easily afford to go for treatment abroad, but what are ordinary people to do?" State Duma lawmaker Vladimir Fedotkin said, Izvestia reported.

He suggested that officials who violate the proposed ban should be fired, the report said.

The head of the Duma's Public Health Committee, Sergei Kalashnikov of the Liberal Democratic Party, and committee member Oleg Kulikov from the Communist faction have both sided with the proposal, the report said.

"Changes in our country happen only when the interests of government officials are

affected." Kalashnikov was quoted as saying.

Kulikov agreed that the country's leadership will pay more attention to the quality of service and the professional training of specialists if they are obliged to get treatment in Russia, Izvestia reported.

However, deputy head of the Public Health Committee Sergei Dorofeyev said that the measure would be hard to enforce, according to the report.

"If Vladimir Fedotkin wants the measure to work, he needs to think up a mechanism for control," Dorofeyev was quoted as saying. "How will he know that an official traveled specifically for medical treatment? And what should be done if there is an urgent need for medical help that cannot be obtained in Russia?"

Fedotkin said that he intends to submit the bill to the Duma before its spring session ends next month.

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