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Russian Medics Demand Putin's Promised Coronavirus Bonuses

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Medics across Russia said they have yet to see Putin's bonuses, which were promised in early April.
Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency

Russian doctors have launched an online petition calling on President Vladimir Putin to pay his promised bonuses to doctors and other healthcare professionals on the frontline of the coronavirus outbreak.

Putin in early April ordered monthly payouts ranging from 25,000 and 50,000 rubles ($300 and $600) for nurses, paramedics and ambulance drivers and 80,000 rubles ($1,000) to doctors treating Covid-19 patients. Nearly a month later, medics across Russia said they have yet to see Putin's bonuses.

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Deistviye (Action), Russia's union of healthcare workers, argued that federal and regional authorities are limiting the number of workers eligible for the bonuses and are using legal

loopholes to lower the amounts of money paid out.

“All this looks like a mockery of medical professionals, who were once deceived by the promise of large salaries in [Putin’s] May decrees,” the union said on Change.org Wednesday.

In a petition signed by more than 40,000 people as of Thursday afternoon, *Deistviye* demanded a tenfold increase of the 56 billion ruble ($710 million) bonus fund.

All categories of healthcare workers should be eligible for the bonuses and should be compensated whether or not they deal directly with Covid-19 patients or if the patients’ tests are confirmed, the union said.

Additionally, *Deistviye* called for increased insurance guarantees for medical workers equal to those Russia’s military personnel. Putin signed an act Wednesday promising 2.7 million rubles ($34,000) in the event of a worker’s death and 68,811 rubles ($870) if they become infected.

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The union pointed to the dangers that medical professionals face both through lack of protective equipment and from hospitals becoming hotbeds for transmission.

“Entire groups are being put on sick leave or are shut inside medical facilities for quarantine. A huge additional burden falls on the remaining workers because they’re left fending for themselves and their incapacitated colleagues,” it said.

“People are literally dropping.”

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