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Russia Shifts Domestic Health Spending to Occupied Ukraine – Vedomosti

August 07, 2023



A clinic in Berdsk, Novosibirsk region. **Kirill Kukhmar / TASS**

Russia has reallocated healthcare spending from dozens of its regions to build and repair hospitals in the occupied territories of eastern Ukraine, the Vedomosti business daily reported Monday, citing a government decree.

Sixty-one out of 85 Russian regions — including annexed Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol — saw cuts of some 2.4 billion rubles ($24.8 million) worth of federal subsidies used to finance the construction of new clinics and the purchase of medical equipment, according to the report.

Russia's Health Ministry told Vedomosti that the funds were "redistributed" following discussions with regional health administrations.

As a result, Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, which Moscow annexed last year, received subsidies worth 1.02 billion rubles ($10.5 million) for building or repairing clinics, as well as buying new equipment, Vedomosti said.

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Overall, Russia's federal project on modernizing primary healthcare is set to spend 88.8 billion rubles ($910 million) in 2023 and 550 billion rubles ($5.7 billion) for 2023-25.

In January, President Vladimir Putin ordered the government to redistribute budget transfers among regions based on their ability to absorb the allocated funds, Vedomosti said.

The 1.02 billion rubles pledged to clinics in occupied Ukrainian territories comes amid Moscow's efforts to rebuild towns and cities its forces had assaulted during the course of its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's Health Ministry has asked regional health authorities to recruit doctors and nurses to work in the occupied regions of Ukraine, according to an internal document published in January.

Authorities previously launched a campaign to recruit essential workers for the "reconstruction" of eastern Ukrainian territories occupied by its forces and devastated by the war.

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