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Author:	Hrvatski liječnički sindikat (HLS) , Renata Čulinović-Čaić		

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At the beginning of 2020, three main Croatian doctor's organizations (Croatian Medical Union, Croatian Medical Chamber and the Croatian Medical Association) began work on the new Law on salaries and employment status of doctors with the Minister of Health, as we reported at our last meeting.

Work on the Law was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the Parliamentary election, held in Croatia in early July, the previous government won another mandate. So in September we continued work on the new Law with the previous/new Minister of Health.

We hope that the Law will be finished soon, and it will finally provide salaries and the status appropriate to the doctors work and responsibilities.

At the end of 2018, Croatian doctors filed several thousand lawsuits for inadequately paid overtime work in the last 7 years, which received their final legal position by the judgment of the Supreme Court in December 2019.

In recent months, a large number of doctors have received final verdicts, but their institutions do not respect final judgments and do not pay the judgement debt.

Therefore, doctors are forced to initiate enforcement proceedings in order to collect the judged debt.

It is estimated that the total state debt to doctors amounts to about 200 million €.

Enforcement proceedings will unavoidably lead to difficult work, and in a large number of hospitals to the inability to pay the costs of regular operations.

Therefore, the Croatian Medical Union (HLS) requested an urgent meeting with the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Health, Finance and Labor at the beginning of September, but to date we have not yet received an invitation from the Government to meet.

About COVID-19 in Croatia

At the request of HLS, corona virus infection is recognized as occupational disease of health workers, if the infection occurred in the workplace.

Although the important role of health workers in the pandemic was discussed on a daily basis, we did not receive any reward for our work in the pandemic. On the contrary, we were not paid for the work done during the pandemic in accordance with legal regulations, which is also a topic we asked to discuss with the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Unfortunately, epidemiological situation significantly deteriorated in Croatia during the summer, specially in late August, when we used to have over 300 new infection every day, with pick of 369 infected on 3rd September 2020. The average age of newly infected people in the summer months is 36. They are mostly infected in nightclubs, in which epidemiological recommendations were not followed.

In September, there is between 200 and 300 new cases every day, and the sources of the infection are mostly gatherings of a large number of people, especially weddings.

As a result, the National Crisis Headquarters has banned the gathering of more than 100 people, and in counties with worse epidemiological situation, that number is limited to a maximum of 50 people.

These days, we are also recording the penetration of the virus in several hospitals, nursing homes, schools and kindergartens.

Wearing masks in all enclosed spaces and in public transportation is obligated. The ban on visiting nursing homes and hospitals is still in force (with some exceptions for immobile patients in nursing homes – visiting is allowed with protective equipment for max 15 minutes).

Medical institutions are working – in generally- on a regular basis with increased epidemiological surveillance measures.

Patients ordered for elective procedures must submit a negative corona test upon arrival at the hospital, not older than 48 hours.

Special wards have been established for the treatment of COVID-positive patients in all hospitals, as well as wards for the isolation and observation of emergency and other suspicious patients.

Daily professional meetings in hospital wards are held with a minimum number of attending doctors.

According to the latest official data of the Croatian Institute of Public Health, on September 20th 2020, there have been total of 14.922 people infected with coronavirus in Croatia since the beginning of the pandemic. 12.536 people have fully recovered, 2.138 cases remain active with 248 deaths recorded to this day. So far 225.014 people have been tested (5,6% population).

Out of the total number of tested, we have 6.04 positive tests The total death rate per 1,000,000 inhabitants is 55.5 / 1,000,000 inhabitants.

Healthcare workers infected:

According to the official data of the Croatian Institute of Public Health, on September 15th 2020, there have been total of **863** healthcare workers infected with coronavirus in Croatia since the beginning of the pandemic (218 doctors, 388 nurses, 257 other healthcare workers)

Of a total of 863 positives, 85 were treated in the hospital, of which 1 doctor was on a respirator.

We had no deceased health workers.

On September 15th, there were active positive 131 healthworkers (24 doctors, 70 nurses, 37 other healthcare workers), out of them 1 hospitalized, none at the respirator

Quarantine is ordered for 579 healthworkers (131 doctors, 325 nurses, 123 other healthcare workers) .

Official data is available at www.koronavirus.hr and updated daily.