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ROMANIA COUNTRY REPORT

In the last two months of this year, the second series of parliamentary and presidential elections will take place.

The salary fund of employees in the health and social assistance sector was increased in two installments: the first installment in March and the second in June, in total by 20%. Salary increases are not unitary 20% - but differ for each category of employees in the system. By distributing this money, an attempt was made to "remove inequities", declared the Minister of Health.

Perhaps surprisingly, at least in percentage terms, the largest salary increases were achieved by medical assistants 40%, nurses 40%, stretcher bearers 45%, medical residents 25%, as well as biologists, chemists, biochemists, psychologists and physical therapists 25%.

Specialist and primary care doctors obtained a percentage increase of 13%, but it must be stated that the level of their salaries and increases is much higher than that of other categories of employees in the health system.

According to a recent study, only 4 out of 10 Romanians declare themselves satisfied with the interaction with the medical system. Doctors say that trust in the health system has eroded with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is a need to educate the population about health.

Approximately 30% of hospitals in Romania currently have a major funding deficit. The Romanian health sector has been suffering from chronic underfunding for a very long time.

Just three weeks ago, the Ministry of Health issued an Ordinance, which allows on-demand doctors to practice and hold management positions in the public sector until the age of 70. Also, in the same document, another way of organizing the residency competition for doctors is proposed. The competition will be held in four distinct specialty groups: medical specialties, surgical specialties, anesthesia-intensive care and emergency medicine and paraclinical specialties.

In the last 3-4 months, public opinion and the media have been preoccupied with the scandal at a hospital in the capital of Romania, following reports from the prosecutor's office related to the deaths of several patients in the intensive care unit. The lack of clear protocols and well-argued legal provisions meant that the deaths of some patients in the terminal phase were classified as attacks on people's lives and health, and two colleagues from the intensive care unit were accused of premeditated murder. The colleagues were arrested by the prosecutor's office and only after a period they were released. The charge of premeditated murder was withdrawn, but the investigation has not yet been completed.

For on-call doctors, the same situation is maintained with the two contracts with the same employing medical institution. The first contract is for the doctor's base rate, and the second contract is for extra guards performed outside the base rate. The hourly rate for additional guards is different (lower) than for the mandatory guard in the basic rate.

Bucharest, September 2024