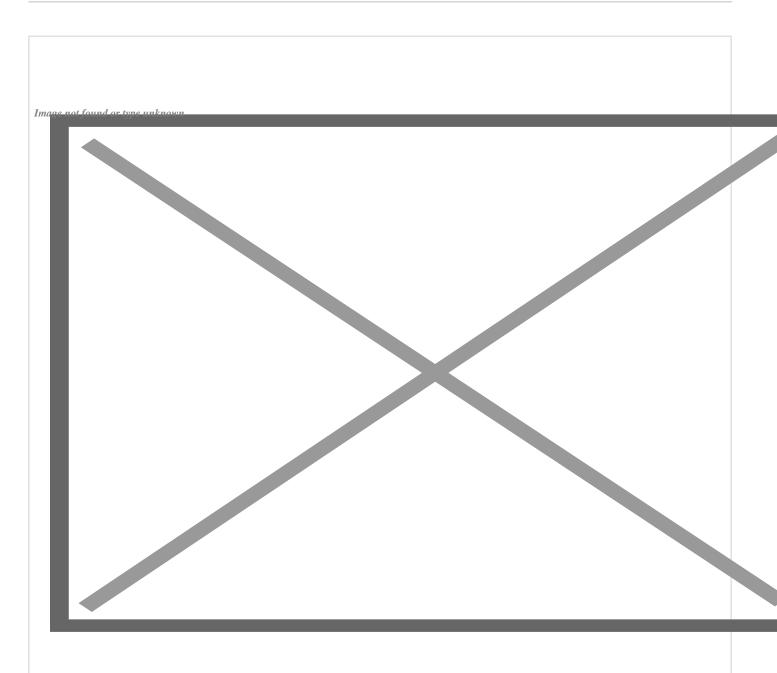# Tens of thousands march in Madrid to stop privatization of Spain's healthcare system

Madrid, January 17 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands marched in Madrid, Spain to stop the right-wing regional government's ongoing attack on the public healthcare system. "Cutting public health is criminal!" demonstrators chanted as they held placards against the push for privatization and cuts.

Carrying homemade signs with slogans that translated into English as "S.O.S. Public Healthcare" snd "Stop Privatization," the marchers clamored against staff shortages and criticized what they consider the favoritism shown by regional authorities toward private health care providers.

The event was the latest in a series of protest actions, including strikes, by Madrid's public health workers against the capital region's government, which is led by Popular Party heavyweight Isabel Ayuso.

The unions that organized the demonstration said Madrid spends the least amount per capita on primary health care of any Spanish region even though it has the highest per capita income. They claim that for every 2 euros spent on health care in Madrid, one ends up in the private sector.

"We have about 40 or 50 patients per day and can give them about six minutes each," Ana Encinas, a doctor who has worked in primary care in the nation's capital for 37 years, toldReuters. "The problem is that they do not allow us to give proper care to patients."

One protester in the crowd—led by doctors, nurses, labor groups, and other defenders of public health—was dressed as the Grim Reaper and held a sign that said: "I am Ayuso's plan for the emergency ward."

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