



Korean Health & Medical Workers' Union (KHMU)

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To eliminate COVID-19, establish infectious disease response system, and strengthen public healthcare!

Briefing on Labor-Government Agreements for resolving health and medical workers' issues

- To prepare standards for medical personnel responding to COVID-19! To institutionalize the life safety allowance: To improve makeshift manpower management and enhance measures of forcing medical staff to take more burden!
- By 2025, to designate and operate at least one accountable medical institution for each of 70 mid-size care areas and specify the priority areas for the establishment of public hospitals: A new turning point for public health expansion!
- To establish optimal manpower standards for each occupation and institutionalize the ratio of patients to nurses: A historical opportunity to move to the Human Resources Standards Act!
- To implement a pilot project for a predictable and regular shift system: A turning point for shift reform!
- To eliminate five major unlicensed and illegal medical practices: a valuable opportunity to protect patients' safety and people's lives
- To fully expand and implement the integrated nursing and care service system in acute-phase treatment providing hospitals with more than 300 beds by 2026: A turning point for resolving the burden of the public's care costs

As the union and the government have reached an agreement, we cancel the general industrial strike scheduled at 7 a.m. today.

The Korea Health and Medical Workers' Union (KHMU) and the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) finally reached an agreement by narrowing the gap in our opinions on the remaining five issues after 11 hours of marathon negotiations, the 13th-round labor-government negotiations starting at 3 p.m. on September 1, one day before the general strike.

The central executive committee and the board of delegates of the KHMU went through a procedure for collecting opinions on the final draft the union prepared through final coordination with the MOHW. After three hours of intense discussion at the temporary delegate meeting held online, 241 out of 246 registered delegates attended (98%) and 200 voted in favor (83%) to accept the final draft. Accordingly, KHMU president Na Soon-ja and Minister of Health and Welfare Kwon Deok-chul finally signed the labor-government agreement at 2 a.m. on September 2. As a result, the agreement was dramatically concluded after three months of negotiations between the KHMU and the MOHW, five hours before the



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strike began. Accordingly, the KHMU cancels the strike scheduled at 7:00 a.m. on September 2.

Through the negotiations, the two reached a very meaningful and fruitful agreement in relation to the expansion of public healthcare, the establishment of an infectious disease response system, the hiring of more health and medical personnel, and the improvement of treatment.



➤ **KHMU president Na Soon-ja and Minister of Health and Welfare Kwon Deok-chu**

In particular, in order to establish an infectious disease response system and expand public healthcare, we have agreed on the preparation of standards for medical personnel responding to COVID-19, the institutionalization of the payment of life safety allowances to medical personnel responding to infectious diseases, the designation and operation of at least one accountable medical institution for each of 70 mid-size care areas by 2025, and support for construction, relocation, and extension of public hospitals, thereby laying out a foundation for preventing the exhaustion of personnel responding the pandemic, keeping their turnover low, and substantially expanding and strengthening public healthcare.

In addition, we have reached a groundbreaking turning point for addressing chronic personnel shortage and poor working conditions, hiring more health and medical personnel, and improving their treatment by agreeing on the establishment of optimal manpower standards for each occupation, the institutionalization of the actual ratio of patients to nurses, the expansion of the integrated nursing and care service system to acute-stage treatment providing hospitals with more than 300 beds by 2026, the expanded implementation of the training-only nurse system to private medical institutions, the application of the night care fee system and the fixed nighttime shift system to all medical institutions from January 2022, the eradication of the five major unlicensed and illegal medical practices, the implementation of a pilot project for a predictable and regular shift system, the enhancement of the system to limit the employment



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of non-regular workers, and the reduction of working hours of Blood Donation Center workers on Saturdays and holidays by two hours.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the people who have given us encouragement and support until such an agreement was reached. We will work harder to protect the health and life of the people in the medical field, while keeping in our hearts the strong interest in and support for the KHMU and our efforts to address the challenges raised by the pandemic: to expand public healthcare and increase health and medical personnel

The KHMU will tell you about our future plans.

Though we cancel the general industrial strike with the conclusion of today's labor-government negotiations, we still have on-site negotiations with each medical institution. We will do our best to reach an amicable agreement by setting a one-week period for intensive negotiations from today to Tuesday, September 7 next week to reach a complete agreement in on-site negotiations.

However, if there are any medical institutions that engage in insincere and high-handed bargaining, and ignore and suppress the union, we will let the public know about their wrong behavior and should correct the wrong practices through intensive industrial struggles with our 80,000 members.

We also appeal to the government and the National Assembly. The general strike we prepared was the last hope for health and medical workers who ended up standing on the brink after they were exhausted and driven to resign, after they cried out, "I can't stand it any longer," "Nothing will last in this way." It was not a strike to raise wages or to satisfy selfish greed, but to protect the lives and safety of the people. It was not the strike aimed at a medical crisis amidst the pandemic, but the most desperate strike in the world to prevent the collapse of quarantine and medical services.

Today's agreement is not the end for us. The Prime Minister's Office promised support, such as adjustment of the roles among ministries, so that today's agreements are faithfully implemented. We urge the government to play a responsible role in putting today's agreements into practice. In addition, we call on the National Assembly to take the responsibility for performing its role in revising related acts and expanding the budget in the upcoming regular session.

The KHMU will continue to fulfill our social responsibility for the safety of patients and the provision of quality medical services with pride and duty to protect the health and life of the people. Thank you.

For more details and photos, please refer to our union website as;

<https://bogun.nodong.org/x/?mid=eng2020>