

# World famous Mayo Clinic cuts pay, furloughs employees amidst COVID-19 pandemic

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The Rochester, Minnesota-based Mayo Clinic, one of America's leading hospital systems and Minnesota's largest private employer, has announced pay cuts and furloughs for over 20,000 of its nearly 70,000 employees.

Announcing the pay cuts, Mayo CEO Gianrico Farrugia cited the lack of revenue from elective surgical procedures, which have been delayed across the country to concentrate hospital resources on the spreading COVID-19 crisis. According to the Minnesota Hospital Association, the loss of revenue from elective surgeries will cost hospital systems in Minnesota over \$3 billion over the next 3 months.

The cuts expose the real attitude of the capitalist class to the medical professionals, nurses and health care workers who are on the front lines of the struggle to contain the pandemic and save lives, often at great personal risk. While these workers do express the heroism and self-sacrifice of millions of workers who instinctively respond to the crisis in the spirit of social solidarity, the current media praise for the "coronavirus heroes" masks the callous indifference of the corporate elite, which considers them expendable.

As with every other social need, the safety and protection of these workers, not to mention their jobs and income, take a back seat to the drive for profit.

Other hospital systems across the nation have responded in a similar manner to the drain on profits caused by the pandemic and the shutdown of much of the economy. To date, 117 hospitals and hospital chains have imposed cuts of various sorts.

- Detroit Medical Center announced that it is furloughing 480 employees who are not involved in COVID-19 treatment.

- Trinity Health, based in Livonia, Michigan plans to furlough 2,500 employees.

- Allina Health and St. Francis Medical Center in Minnesota are requiring all nonpatient care staff to take a furlough, giving employees the option of using paid time off.

- Ephraim McDowell Health, based in Danville, Kentucky, announced that it will furlough 20 percent of its 1,700 employees.

- Prisma Health in Greenville, South Carolina announced plans last month to cut hours for 3,900 of its 30,000 employees and impose an undisclosed number of furloughs.

Major hospital systems have also mounted attacks on health care workers who expose to the public the desperate and unsafe conditions in the hospitals. Nurses and other workers have been terminated or punished with disciplinary action for protesting against the lack of personal protective equipment.

Attacks on health care workers' pay, benefits and working conditions did not begin with the pandemic. Health care workers around the world have entered into struggles against low pay and understaffing, including in Minnesota. Last year, nurses at five major hospital systems in the state were on the verge of a strike but were blocked by the unions. The pushing through of attacks with the aid of the pro-corporate trade unions in recent decades has been rewarded with tremendous pay

increases for hospital CEOs. Their pay doubled from 2005 to 2015, while compensation for bedside staff and doctors remained stagnant or decreased due to cuts in benefits.



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