

AMLO denies health cutbacks, blames 'looting' by previous government

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President says reports of layoffs are propaganda by 'underworld' journalists out to discredit the government



President López Obrador today denied that funding to the health sector has been cut or withheld, and blamed the previous government for “looting” the public health care system and leaving it in “crisis.”

Speaking at his morning press conference, López Obrador asserted that “there is no retention [of resources],” adding “it has to be clarified, all the funds are being transferred.”

The president’s defense of his government’s health funding comes after a day after the newspaper *Milenio* reported that [a reduction in federal funding is affecting hospitals in 24 states](#), and two days after the chief of the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) [announced his resignation](#), citing budget and staffing cuts at the agency and “pernicious influence” by the Secretariat of Finance (SHCP).

The Secretariat of Health supported those claims in a report that says the SHCP has withheld 1.2 billion pesos (US \$63 million) in funding for the sector this year including 123.3 million pesos allocated for the purchase of medicines and 390 million pesos destined for pharmacist services and inpatient care.

However, López Obrador insisted that state governments are getting the funding they were allocated in the 2019 budget, and stressed that his administration is “ensuring that that there is no lack of medicines” in the public health system while stamping out corrupt practices in their purchase.

From July 1, the federal government will be solely responsible for the purchase of medicines and their distribution to the states.

The president also claimed that reports of cutbacks and layoffs were propaganda intended to discredit the government.

“No one is being laid off, it’s propaganda, it’s to damage us. Now you’re seeing the ‘underworld of journalism,’” he charged.

Although the former IMSS chief was the first to report there were layoffs, the president has refused to respond to that and other issues he raised in his letter of resignation.

López Obrador also blamed the administration of his predecessor, charging that problems plaguing the health sector – including shortages of doctors, nurses and medicines – are the legacy of the previous government.

“That’s the way the government left us. In crisis! Those who devoted themselves to looting,” López Obrador said.

The Seguro Popular health care program, [whose replacement was announced last month](#), was a scheme of “total corruption,” he added.

The president also said he has “complete confidence” in the newly appointed general manager of IMSS, Zoé Robledo.

The social security institute manages a large proportion of Mexico’s public hospitals but according to outgoing chief Germán Martínez, its capacity to provide health services is threatened by the government’s “neoliberal” cuts.

Source: [Milenio](#) (sp), [El Financiero](#) (sp)