

Press Release

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Patients came out for a lying protest near the Ministry of Finance

Today, about 50 people came out for a lying protest in front of the building of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine. So they are trying to draw attention to the fact that tens of thousands of Ukrainians will die this year if the Ministry of Finance does not fund the procurement of drugs for Ukrainians living with life-threatening diseases, just as 1607 Ukrainians dying due to the lack of medicines every day.

It is today that the Ministry of Finance hosted a meeting attended by representatives of various Departments and Ministries and where the Ministry of Finance suggested re-allocating some extra funds from these Ministries and Departments' budgets to procure essential drugs. These government agencies included Security Service of Ukraine, Ministry of Income and Charges of Ukraine, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education, and others.

One should note that scarce money on medicines that the previous government allocated for Ukrainian patients accounted only for 40% of the needs. This year the numbers were reduced by half due to the devaluation of the hryvnia and the additional VAT on medicines and make up only 20% of the needs. The lack of funds for medicines constitutes 80%.

*"What is 20% of human lives? This is 1 of 5 Ukrainians who will survive. Because of underfunding already in September 22 000 HIV-positive Ukrainians remain untreated, - **says Dmytro Sherembey, Chairman CF "Patients Ukraine."** – System in Ukraine is built in such a way that an official in the Finance Ministry - in fact, just a financial officer, - is the person who is empowered to decide by a signature who live and who will die, which programs will be supported, and which ones reduced. – We know even the name of the man – Vladimir Matviichuk, Deputy Minister of Finance. This man will decide today – whether to re-allocate funds, for example from the Ministry of income and fees and repair facilities for the procurement of drugs for Ukrainians living with life-threatening diseases."*

By their event activists also tried to reach out to the officials who came to the meeting to the Ministry of Finance. Each of these officials was compelled to step over a human body when they were entering the building. This, according to the

activists, symbolized how these officials will step over human life, unless they agree to reallocate funds from their departments and ministries to rescue patients. *"Because of underfunding drug procurement this year, thousands of HIV-positive Ukrainian may be left without treatment, - says Vladimir Zhovtyak, Chairman of the Coordination Council of the All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS. – It can kill HIV-positive Ukrainians, result a new outbreak of the epidemic and can cause the disaster, which Ukraine has not seen for the last 10 years. It cannot be allowed. We will be lying here as long as it takes to the Ministry of Finance to hear us and save people."* According to the estimates of the Ministry of Health and patients, the Government must re-allocate 4.2 billion hryvnias to purchase medicines to prevent deaths and humanitarian disaster.

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