

Will a Public-Private Hospital Deal Help Ailing Mexicans? *Inter-American Dialogue's Latin America Advisor, ft. commentary by Tom Morante and Yani Contreras*

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Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's government is working with private hospitals in order to handle the influx of patients with Covid-19.

Q. Mexico's government on April 13 announced a partnership in which private hospitals will allocate half of their available beds to the public-sector health system in order to treat patients with health matters unrelated to Covid-19 so that the public health system can focus on treating patients infected with the novel coronavirus. The month-long partnership will last until May 23 and will free up 3,115 beds in public-sector health facilities, the government said. How significant is Mexico's partnership for the "single national health care system" in the country's fight against the pandemic? Is the move a step toward universal government-provided health care in Mexico? How would more government involvement in health care in Mexico affect the private health sector and patients?

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A. Thomas Morante, chair of the Insurance Regulatory and Transactional Practice Group, and Yani Contreras, consultant, both at Kaufman, Dolowich & Voluck: "Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures, and the partnership in Mexico between private hospitals and the public health system demonstrates an incredible collaborative effort in the fight against Covid-19. The Ministry of Health reported on March 14 that the public health care system, including hospitals operated by IMSS and Mexican state-owned entities, had approximately 50,000 hospital beds, 2,500 intensive care beds and 9,000 emergency room beds.