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Doctors in Dolpa warn of halting Covid-19 treatment

The health workers have been deprived of allowances and facilities due to them for the treatment of Covid-19 patients since the last fiscal year.



Five doctors are providing treatment to Covid-19 patients at the District Hospital in Dolpa. **Post Photo: Hari Guatam**



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Rukum (west)

Doctors at the District Hospital in Dolpa have warned of halting all medical services and treatment for Covid-19 patients until they are provided with the promised risk [allowances and facilities](https://kathmandupost.com/province-no-5/2021/05/04/frontline-health-workers-deprived-of-promised-risk-allowances) (https://kathmandupost.com/province-no-5/2021/05/04/frontline-health-workers-deprived-of-promised-risk-allowances).

On Monday, the doctors released a written statement stating that they would boycott regular duties unless their allowances and facilities [fixed by the government](https://kathmandupost.com/karnali-province/2020/11/23/frontline-health-workers-in-karnali-province-deprived-of-risk-allowance) (https://kathmandupost.com/karnali-province/2020/11/23/frontline-health-workers-in-karnali-province-deprived-of-risk-allowance) are paid to them.

They have requested the Chief Minister's Office and Ministry of Social Development through the District Health Office in Dolpa to address their demand.

Currently, five doctors are deployed in the treatment of Covid-19 patients in Dolpa District Hospital. They have drawn the attention of the provincial government to their demand, stating that they have not received any benefits, allowances and facilities in the current fiscal year.

"The current fiscal year is coming to an end soon but the government has not even provided allowances of the last fiscal year," said Dr Melina Hamal, one of the doctors working at the hospital.

Amar Singh Shahi, acting health service manager at the District Health Office, said that the office had already informed the Social Development Ministry of Karnali Province about the demands raised by the doctors.

The Karnali government [had decided to give 100 percent allowance](https://kathmandupost.com/karnali-province/2020/01/06/karnali-sets-up-special-encouragement-allowance-to-attract-employees) (https://kathmandupost.com/karnali-province/2020/01/06/karnali-sets-up-special-encouragement-allowance-to-attract-employees) to the doctors working in three remote districts—Dolpa, Mugu and Humla—last year. The government is providing 50 percent encouragement allowance and cent percent Covid-19 risk allowance to the doctors working in seven other districts of Karnali. The provincial government had asked the doctors of Dolpa to choose between Karnali encouragement allowance and the risk allowance. And the doctors, according to Shahi, chose the encouragement allowance.

Hamal argued that the encouragement allowance, which was offered to attract doctors to work in the remote Karnali region, should not be merged with the Covid-19 risk allowance.

He said doctors are feeling discouraged as they are deprived of the risk allowance while other [frontline health workers](https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/govt-asks-hospitals-to-immediately-release-risk-allowance-to-frontline-medicos) (https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/govt-asks-hospitals-to-immediately-release-risk-allowance-to-frontline-medicos) are receiving it.

"The federal government had decided to provide a 50 percent risk allowance. But the decision has not been implemented. We are deprived of the allowance despite working round the clock for the treatment of Covid-19 patients," said Hamal.

According to Shahi, the district health office can issue the allowance as demanded by the doctors if the provincial government instructs them to do so.

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