



Draft resolution on health issues – after treatment for the 7th SGS assembly

The health system is one of the cornerstones of society – an integral part of the social contract – and access to good health services is one of the prerequisites for keeping the country habitable. The contract states that all citizens must be ensured the necessary health services irrespective of economic status or other reasons. That all citizens are entitled to the same services from the “system”, which is funded, for the most part, by shared national funds.

In recent years, such services to persons who need them have been significantly reduced, not least in rural areas. This means that residents in rural areas often need to travel long distances with the attendant costs, and loss of income, in order to obtain the services to which they are entitled. The same applies to their relatives in the event that a companion is needed. In such cases it is entirely at their own expense as the payment participation system takes limited account of the travel and accommodation costs of people living outside major urban areas. The dreadful fact is that many Icelanders have to live in such great insecurity and, in addition, have to deny themselves necessary healthcare services because of the cost. This is simply unacceptable in the year 2019 and an ugly blot on Icelandic society.

While it is a matter of some optimism that increased funding is released to speed up the development of the new Landspítali, it is quite worrisome that the operating funds of the hospital are so limited. International comparisons of the funding of health care bodies in Iceland and comparable bodies overseas have repeatedly confirmed that their operating base is too tight. Agreements have yet to be reached with employees in healthcare services, and the current fiscal budget proposal does not make any provision for normal wage increases in the hospital in 2020-2022. Long-term cuts have a negative impact on the quality of the service – and patient safety.

It is completely unacceptable that normal wage term improvements are to be met with cuts in the service and increased workloads on employees. SGS will never agree to allow cost-restraint measures in the healthcare sector to be covered in such a manner. Healthcare services need to be efficient and economical. In addition, dynamic local services in healthcare bodies in the local community must be ensured.