



# COVID-19

PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON  
HOSPITALIZED  
CHILDREN  
AND ADOLESCENTS  
WITH CHRONIC DISEASES  
IN VENEZUELA



prepara  
familia

From March 13 until December 31 2020



**OVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on Hospitalized Children and Adolescents with Chronic Diseases in Venezuela**

**Prepara Familia**  
Caracas, Venezuela

This report has been composed by Prepara Familia's research team.

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## NGO PREPARA FAMILIA

Prepara Familia is an organization focused on **assisting, accompanying and defending** the rights of hospitalized children and adolescents suffering from chronic illnesses and extreme poverty. We also provide support for their mothers, who are not only forced to handle the difficulties of the diseases, but also face profound scarcity of basic supplies, abandonment situations and gender violence.

We're committed to defending the human rights of hospitalized children and adolescents suffering from chronic illnesses, including the rights of their mothers and families in general.

### **Our objectives are:**

- Offering assistance and education services to hospitalized children and adolescents suffering from chronic illnesses.
- Developing support, accompanying, education and empowerment programs for mothers/women caregivers.
- Defending the rights of hospitalized children and women caregivers on the national and international stage.



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## COVID-19 pandemic's impact on hospitalized children and adolescents with chronic diseases in Venezuela

Chronicles between March  
13 and December 31 2020

We express our deepest concern for the current situation of hospitalized children and adolescents with chronic pathologies and women caregivers.

Both groups suffer the impact of the Complex Humanitarian Emergency that Venezuela is currently immersed in and that is now exponentially growing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which weakens the fundamental rights of a group that was already at risk.

Children, adolescents and women caregivers particularly suffer the impact of the severe economic crisis, medicine, food, medical supplies and gas scarcity, plus the danger of weak government institutions. Next, we present an analysis of the situation from March 13 to December 31 2020, concerning the weakened rights of the patients of José Manuel de los Ríos Children Hospital, national reference center that takes care of children and adolescents from all around the country.



## Right to Appropriate and Relevant Health Services

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### Medicine, Medical Supplies and Vaccines

1. Since the announcement of the State of Alarm decree on March 13 2020, the failures and deficiencies in the medical supply for children and adolescents with chronic diseases persist

- a) Children patients in the oncology and hematology areas do not receive their required chemotherapy protocol in full.
- b) Children patients hospitalized in the neurosurgery area do not have access to low, medium or high-pressure valves.
- c) Children with HIV<sup>1</sup> only receive a part of their required antiretroviral protocol and children's formula, provided by an UN's AIDS program and private donors.
- d) Children patients in the plastic surgery area require pain killers and special abdominal binders.
- e) Children with nephrological pathologies require antihypertensive medicine and various types of catheters.
- f) Children who have received transplants face shortages of their needed immunosuppressor protocols.
- g) Dangerously malnourished children require nutritional supplements.

2. During the pandemic, severe limitations in the medical supply chain persist, supplies necessary for the effective treatment of children and adolescents in the J.M. de los Ríos Children Hospital, according with the provisions of the National Therapeutic Formulary and the particular needs of this health center.

The supply managed by the Health Ministry (MPPS) and its distinct dependencies is irregular and insufficient. The Pan-American Health Association (OPS) has made significant contributions in this regard, although a registry of the donated medicine and medical supplies does not exist.

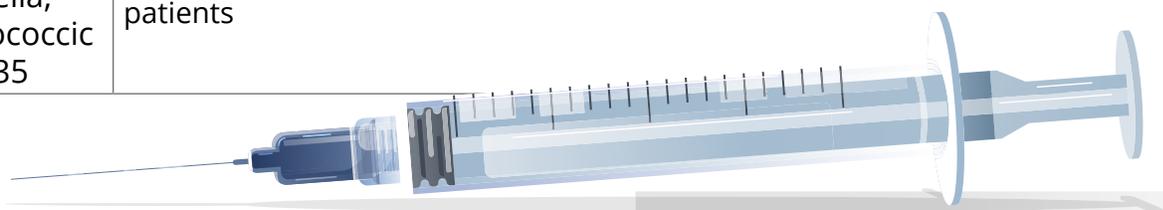
1 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://venezuelaunida.com/7-claves-sobre-los-ninos-con-vih-en-venezuela-hablan-dos-infectologas-pediatras->

3. Besides, the irregular supply of vaccines persists. Frequently they become scarce at the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital, as it also usually happens in other hospitals and private clinics. This obstacle makes an effective vaccination process impossible. As a consequence, preventable diseases like measles, diphtheria and whooping cough proliferate.

In the healthy child unit, the four refrigerators that maintained the required vaccine refrigeration chain are broken. The Hospital's administration habilitated a vaccination post in the ground floor, ignoring the pediatric service protocol, by which vaccines from the Health Ministry had to be handled. On December 18 2020, the Hospital's administration relocated the vaccines from the pediatric unit and since then they've been vaccinating children on the mentioned vaccination post, including high-risk patients.

In the following square we detail the irregularities in the vaccine supply in the J.M. de los Ríos Children Hospital:

VACCINES	SUPPLY
Pentavalent	The supply was irregular between June and August 2020
Double adult and viral trivalent	Irregular supply on February, May and June 2020
Antipneumococcic 13v	Hasn't been delivered since June 2016
Yellow Fever	Irregular since 2017 to the end of 2019. Received during 2020
Antirotavirus	Hasn't been received since March 2017
Antiinfluenza	Irregular since 2016 until the end of 2019, when they started being received again, until October 2020
Anrimeningococo BC	Irregular in 2017 and 2018. Absent during 2019, until they started getting delivered again, until September 2020
Pneumo 23 Valent	Hasn't been received since June 2016
VPH, Antihepatitis A, Antivaricella, Antipneumococcic ACYW135	They're not included in the National Program, not even for the high-risk patients



The country's medical societies, "Red Defendamos la Epidemiología Nacional" and the Venezuelan Society of Public Health (SVSP), have warned of a general drop in the number of immunizations between 2015 and 2018, particularly regarding rotavirus, influenza and pneumococci. The Venezuelan Association of Childcare and Pediatrics (SVPP) also gave out warnings. According to the calculations of the SVPP, the State has been ignoring 52% of the population susceptible to being vaccinated. More so, Venezuela keeps being a debtor to the Vaccine Fund of the Pan-American Health Association (OPS), situation that complicates the functioning of the vaccine mechanism in the country, even regarding COVID-19 vaccines. We hope that the State can resolve this difficulty, so that vaccines can come into the country.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Amplified Immunization Program (PAI) report about Venezuela, published by the OPS on September 2020, a multi-year exhaustive immunization plan does not exist. Since 2016, neither influenza vaccines, antipneumococcal vaccines or rotavirus vaccines have entered the country.

At the end of 2020, the OPS, in its evaluation in a pandemic context, warned that diphtheria transmission, which outbreak began on 2016, generating 54 cases and 2 deaths on 2020, will continue growing until adequate immunization levels be reached.

## Medicine, Medical Supplies and Vaccines

4. Since May 17, J.M. de los Ríos Hospital started receiving COVID-19 symptomatic children. Although the State did not equip it for that purpose<sup>3</sup>, mothers of patients denounced this through a letter delivered to the Hospital's administration, which does not provide biosecurity equipment, hygiene conditions, intensive care, cardiology unit, nor laboratory reagents.

Health staff and the Hospital's medical association demanded, through a letter delivered to the administration, that the permanent supply of water be guaranteed; that new patients be isolated; effective staff distribution and strengthening; and correct managing of medical waste. They're not opposed to attend COVID-19 patients, they just demand the basic appropriate conditions to correctly do so<sup>4</sup>.

They demand a diverse commission to be formed, consisting of a committee member, a representative of the medical society and one from the Hospital's administration,

2 <https://efectococuyo.com/salud/dificultades-de-acceso-a-vacunas-desconocidas-por-maduro-existen-2015/>

3 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/jm-de-los-rios-recibe-a-ninos-con-covid-19-en-medio-de-fallas-de-servicios/>

4 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/personal-del-j-m-de-los-rios-exige-condiciones-optimas-para-recibir-ninos-con-covid-19/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTcwMjQwOTkxMjgNDA4NTIyODkyGmEyNGIxYTM4MDElZWNIzE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usg=AFQjCN-H6mpVRjbl--XnMhMPf4vMZX4dHHA>

also that a work team be formed for the correct managing of the care needed by the COVID-19 patients, which members will be prohibited from also interacting with high-risk patients (nephrology, oncology and hematology)<sup>5</sup>.

## Biosecurity Protocols – COVID Area

5. When it comes to the pandemic, the recommendations from the OMS and OPS insist that all members of the hospital's staff follow the proper barrier protocols.

On May 17 J.M. de los Ríos Hospital started to receive kids with symptoms of COVID-19 and its staff has not been able to follow the minimal biosecurity protocols, not even inside the COVID area.

Hospital's staff is provided daily with a surgical mask and a pair of gloves, not fulfilling their needs, they've been forced to reuse disposable equipment.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, maintenance staff is not supplied with neither bleach or other disinfectants and the water supply is irregular. Civil society organizations<sup>7</sup> have donated biosecurity protocols to hospital's staff. They've also organized fundraising events and concerts to be able to provide more needed pandemic managing supplies.<sup>8</sup>

6. Hospital's staff from several states have been treated as criminals after denouncing the scarcity of protocols and for demanding better conditions for dealing with the health emergency. The medical professional's guild is being persecuted and censored<sup>9</sup>. Examples follow:

a) Nurse Rubén Duarte was arrested and then freed for denouncing that he wasn't provided with the security protocols so he could safely treat patients suffering from COVID-19 in the Central Hospital of San Cristobal.

5 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/medicos-del-j-m-de-los-rios-hacen-un-pliego-de-peticiones-a-la-direccion-para-enfrentar-la-pandemia/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYASoUMTcwMjQwOTkxMjg5NDA4NTIyODkyGmEyNGIxYTM4MDE1ZWNIzE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usg=AFQjCN-HkRFq2dJofubSjwyIWfMjtcx6fw>

6 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/la-pandemia-empeoro-la-crisis-humanitaria-i/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTU0ODA5NDI4M-jAxNzAyODMyNjUyGmY0Yzk0NmE3ZTk2M2I2MjE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usg=AFQjCNFL9eaMMOKijp0aKEDnWnUKwaAY4w>

7 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/prepara-familia-dono-1-096-mascarillas-faciales-a-hospitales/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUM-TI0NzAxMjU2NDEzMDM0MTIzOTMyGmEyNGIxYTM4MDE1ZWNIzE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usg=AFQjCNG4BvbdKvPzeDZ0hKQYNA-s4NmTFw>

8 [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.diariolasamericas.com/cultura/prepara-familia-y-aliados-invitan-la-musica-nos-salva-n4205811&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTODEyMDQ4Mjk2NDgxNDYzODIzNzIzRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNEVFY-w2IaWqlDmfSKYK\\_11ESRizyA](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.diariolasamericas.com/cultura/prepara-familia-y-aliados-invitan-la-musica-nos-salva-n4205811&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTODEyMDQ4Mjk2NDgxNDYzODIzNzIzRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNEVFY-w2IaWqlDmfSKYK_11ESRizyA)

9 <https://cepaz.org/articulos/el-gremio-de-la-salud-amenazado-frente-al-covid-19/>

- b) Obstetrics resident María Lugo and Anesthesiology resident Adriana Vargas were arrested and then freed for possessing emergency care supplies.
- c) Bio-analyst Andrea Soyago was arrested and then freed in Trujillo for sharing information about COVID-19 cases in the state with her colleagues, through the chatting app WhatsApp.

These are only a few examples; similar criminalization events happen daily.

## Especial COVID Area

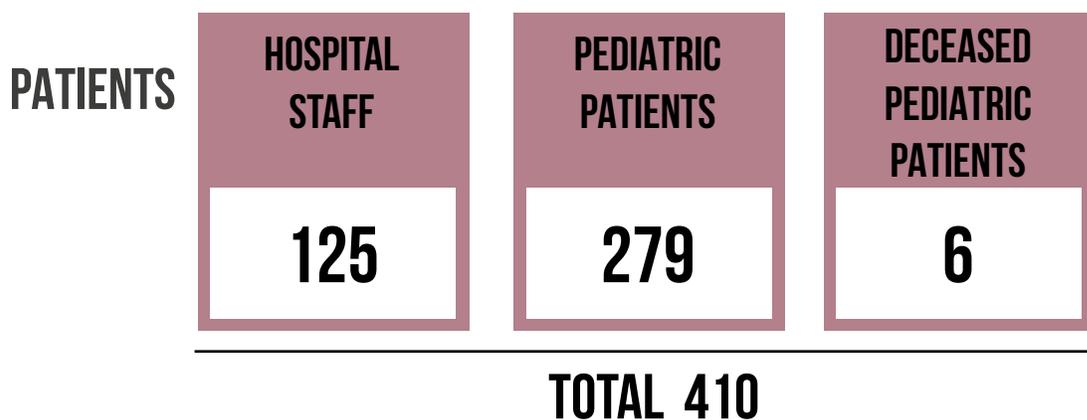
7. The COVID area has proceeded in a different way from the hospital's normal dynamic. It has effectively followed the provisions of the manual developed by the infections committee.

During the first months, only this area was provided with biosecurity supplies by the State, meanwhile, staff working on other areas of the hospital were only receiving one mask and a pair of gloves daily.

Hospital staff must be supplied with the standard protocols for reducing the risk of transmission between patients and themselves.

In the public hospitals of the country, pediatric units have been laser focused on COVID symptomatic children, this has hazarded the health of children suffering from chronic diseases, nephrotic, hematologic and oncologic conditions.

These are the numbers of children, adolescents and hospital staff that have received care on the special COVID area of the J.M. de los Ríos Children Hospital until December 29 2020:





## Medical Treatment Units

9. Since July 10, during a week and a half, chemotherapies were suspended, same with lumbar punctions and biopsies. The suspension affected 30 children from the hematology and oncology services, after the air conditioning malfunctioned in the mixing unit, which was facing problems since May.

Chemotherapies cannot be suspended because the risk levels instantly rise, also the recently diagnosed children, that should have started chemotherapy a week before, were unable to do so.<sup>14</sup>

Since February 26, the ICU was closed because of supply scarcity, ventilator malfunctions and as a consequence of three specialized doctor's resignations. The ICU's closure in one of the most important Hospitals in the country, especially for pediatric care for children from many states, it's clearly a catastrophe.

## Available Hospital Beds, Elevators and ORs

10. Due to quarantine's transportation restrictions, there has been a reduction of hospital beds in use in the J.M. de los Ríos Children Hospital. From 127 occupied beds on March 2 2020, to just 48 on December of the same year.

11. Regarding elevators, on December 31 only one out of nine functioned. Isolation tower's and appointment tower's elevators do not work, only the one from the hospitalization tower keeps working, although it has presented service interruptions due to lack of maintenance.

Many children at the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital deal with various disabilities. Either they're wheelchair bound, severely malnourished, cancer patients among other pathologies that make it difficult for them to go up and down the stairs. Their mothers are forced to carry them, children and adolescents alike.

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/quimioterapias-suman-una-semana-suspendidas-en-el-jm-de-los-rios/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTOTg5MzE0NDc5MDExMDk5NDE3OTIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNFcr52UT0mF4A\\_aFHx-F49esEHdFiA](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/quimioterapias-suman-una-semana-suspendidas-en-el-jm-de-los-rios/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTOTg5MzE0NDc5MDExMDk5NDE3OTIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNFcr52UT0mF4A_aFHx-F49esEHdFiA)

12. The hospital has nine ORs, only seven of them are operational. However, only two are actually used because of a scarcity of 30+ anesthesiologists. Since the beginning of quarantine only simple operations, that don't merit ICU care, are performed, due to, as we have mentioned, the closing of the unit on February 26.

## Laboratories and Equipment

13. In the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital the reagents supply for laboratories is particularly irregular, there aren't any type of reagents to make any sort of culture test. Very rarely are reagents provided for a simple hematology. Women caregivers can't properly comply with quarantine because they must constantly compare several budgets for exams in private clinics and also look for foundations to support them (only a few continue providing support during the pandemic).<sup>15</sup>

The costs for performing exams have risen due to hyperinflation and the ever-sinking value of the Venezuelan currency. Women caregivers must visit several laboratories and private clinics, because scarcity of reagents and other medical supplies has become a problem in the private sector too, due to the state of the emergency that the health sector in general has been enduring. The laboratory in the nephrology unit hasn't been operational because neither the air conditioning nor the venous gases machine works.

The laboratories of the hematology unit do not work, they're not supplied with reagents nor with other essential medical devices. The country's blood banks also present scarcity problems, which complicates the lives of patients suffering from thalassemia, sickle-cell anemia, medullar aplasia, among others, that depend on regular blood transfusions every 15 days.

This situation has worsened due to the difficulties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of blood donors have been unable to easily mobilize. Due to restrictions on serologic tests, blood banks—responsible for supplying the tissue to hospitals—cannot rule out the existence of HIV or hepatitis C in donations.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/desesperados-por-el-costoso-peregrinaje-de-un-examen-de-laboratorio/&ct=ga&cd=CAEY-ACoTOTAxMjA5ODIzMjA1MDcyMjc2MTIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpj206ZXM6VVVM&usg=AFQjCNF9nufSbLQAXUkSHhXes0tMEgpQ7w>

14. Hospitalized patients in the J.M. de los Ríos Children Hospital do not have access to a tomograph, magnetic resonance machine or craniotome. Each unit has several out of order equipment due to a total lack of maintenance. Days before the State of Alarm decree, a small portable x-ray machine was delivered by the Health Ministry. It works through smartphone pictures, it malfunctioned in September and has not been fixed since. The x-ray unit has been out of order for five years.<sup>16</sup>

Due to all of these factors, women caregivers are forced to keep exposing themselves to the risks of a COVID-19 contagion, by constantly searching for affordable medical exams in a context of hyperinflation and a generalized scarcity of essential goods.

## Hemodialysis Unit and Organ Transplant Program

15. The hemodialysis unit, located in the nephrology area, is the only unit in the country able to take care of children weighing less than 10 kg. It has 15 machines, from which only 6-7 have been operational during the pandemic, due to mechanical failures and lack of maintenance. This situation decreases the number of hours and days that children can receive hemodialysis. On December 30 only 3 machines continue to function.

In the hemodialysis unit the air conditioning does not work since April 6, this constitutes a considerable risk due to the danger of bacteria proliferation. After several weeks it was repaired, but the damage already caused to the children's health cannot be repaired. Currently only 12 children are getting hemodialysis. The maintenance failures of medical equipment is a constant in all public hospitals in the country.

The Venezuelan Organ Seeking Program has been suspended since June 1 2017, due to a generalized scarcity of immunosuppressors. Since Fundavene, an organization attached to the Health Ministry, suspended the organ seeking program in the country, approximately 700 hundred people requiring a transplant<sup>17</sup> have not been able to get it. From those, 10% were children and adolescents, all of those in the hemodialysis

16 [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/hospital-jm-de-los-rios-ascensores-rayos-x/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTY1N-zU0MzE4NDYwMTkyMjMwNjlyGmEyNGIxYTM4MDE1ZWNIzE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usg=AFQjCNGFH0xBwxr8\\_7d2ILdowObppSnbPQ](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/hospital-jm-de-los-rios-ascensores-rayos-x/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTY1N-zU0MzE4NDYwMTkyMjMwNjlyGmEyNGIxYTM4MDE1ZWNIzE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usg=AFQjCNGFH0xBwxr8_7d2ILdowObppSnbPQ)

17 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/urge-reactivar-programa-de-trasplantes-de-organos-del-j-m-de-los-rios/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTNTM0Mjk3Mzc1OTk0MjA5MjQ3NDlaYTI0YjFhMzgwMTVlY2U3MTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNGXMsUM4s-W0R97Fb-yiCd54fXkW-g>

unit are then forced to depend on the treatment, without the possibility of getting a transplant<sup>18</sup>, which would allow them to live a more comfortable life.

Regarding bone marrow transplants, on December 31, 25s children and adolescents continue waiting for an opportunity to leave the country to be transplanted, due to transplants being currently impossible to perform in Venezuela. Since quarantine began, international travel was suspended, which caused the collaboration with international organizations to provide these children with everything they need to travel and get an organ transplant to also be suspended until this solution become available again.

## Health Workers / Wages / Mobility

16. Quarantine has complicated the ability of health workers to easily get to their workplaces.<sup>19</sup> Generalized gasoline scarcity worsens this situation. Lines at gas stations can last for days and although a lot of medics and nurses have safe passage documents, they are forced to wait in line for hours without being given special treatment due to being essential workers.

Additionally, very few public transportation units are operational. Many people prefer to just walk for many hours instead to get to work. In the case of the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital, a transport unit was assigned for getting staff to the nearest subway station.

Since March 16, the Hospital's administration sent home all workers over 55 years old to prevent them from getting COVID-19. After the easing of quarantine measures, very few have re-incorporated to the staff due to low wages and mobility issues.

18 [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/venezuela-dejo-de-realizar-mas-de-700-trasplantes-en-tres-anos-sin-sistema-de-procura-de-organos/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTOTEyNDgxMjYxOTY3Mzg0Njg0NDIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCN-HAJ022m\\_gUzYrBz5s\\_zALU5nnmDQ](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/venezuela-dejo-de-realizar-mas-de-700-trasplantes-en-tres-anos-sin-sistema-de-procura-de-organos/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTOTEyNDgxMjYxOTY3Mzg0Njg0NDIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCN-HAJ022m_gUzYrBz5s_zALU5nnmDQ)

19 [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/coronavirus/los-intensivistas-en-venezuela-pocos-y-abatidos-por-la-covid-19-ii/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYASoUMTA1OTEyNjY1NTA5MTc0MzI5MzMyGjc0NTY0OWZmMTc5MThlNTE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usg=AFQjCNEVaNnnxmF-CIFi1qojXKzneaF\\_3gg](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/coronavirus/los-intensivistas-en-venezuela-pocos-y-abatidos-por-la-covid-19-ii/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYASoUMTA1OTEyNjY1NTA5MTc0MzI5MzMyGjc0NTY0OWZmMTc5MThlNTE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usg=AFQjCNEVaNnnxmF-CIFi1qojXKzneaF_3gg)

17. Health worker's wages lie between 4 and 20 dollars a month,<sup>20</sup> clearly insufficient for purchasing basic goods.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, they're unable to provide themselves with proper nutrition or essential medicine.<sup>22</sup> More so, nurse staff deficit grows every day. In the case of the night shift, there are usually 3 or 4 nurses per tower. Meanwhile, nurses continue to be criminalized for denouncing problems related to the pandemic.

The J.M. de los Ríos Children Hospital is a teaching hospital. There's a worrying resident deficit, due to resignation and the reduction in the number of aspiring residents. For example, for 25 openings for first year pediatrics residents, only 12 candidates submitted applications and only 8 of them remain in the Hospital. Due to migration, the rest of the units also experience similar problems.

18. The wave of health worker migration has diminished the overall capacity of public hospitals. In the J.M. de los Ríos Children Hospital, between 2018 and 2019, 650 staff members submitted their resignations. Specialized doctors, nurse staff and other health worker's payroll keeps getting smaller due to low wages and poor working conditions.<sup>23</sup> On April 2020, there were 116 specialized doctors on the Hospital's payroll, while in 2008 there were 273 plus 63 residents.

- 20 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/gano-vendiendo-tostones-salario-empleada-sector-salud/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTOzNTU3MDY3NjQxMzQwOTQwMDkyGmEyNGIxYTM4MDE1ZWNIzE6Y29tOmVzOIVT&usg=AFQjCNETGOQB2XMXq7chrgmT-8tAai4fQXw>
- 21 [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.analitica.com/actualidad/actualidad-nacional/no-le-importa-la-vida-de-los-venezolanos-enfermeros-rechazaron-aumento-de-salario-minimo/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTNzExMjkwOTcyMjM4OTY1NDIxMjlaNzQ1NjQ5ZmYxNzIxOGU1MTpjb206ZXM6V-VM&usg=AFQjCNHfsX9R0HOIbEftA6c\\_9G4fwb\\_9wQ](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.analitica.com/actualidad/actualidad-nacional/no-le-importa-la-vida-de-los-venezolanos-enfermeros-rechazaron-aumento-de-salario-minimo/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTNzExMjkwOTcyMjM4OTY1NDIxMjlaNzQ1NjQ5ZmYxNzIxOGU1MTpjb206ZXM6V-VM&usg=AFQjCNHfsX9R0HOIbEftA6c_9G4fwb_9wQ)
- 22 [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://elpitazo.net/gran-caracas/trabajadores-del-hospital-j-m-de-los-rios-exigen-suministros-para-mejorar-la-atencion/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTOTY0MTgzMDU1NzIwNjUxMTQwODIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYyYjYyMTpjb206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNEV5cqLm-ujO-yN-\\_O4GCTASMGs03w](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://elpitazo.net/gran-caracas/trabajadores-del-hospital-j-m-de-los-rios-exigen-suministros-para-mejorar-la-atencion/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTOTY0MTgzMDU1NzIwNjUxMTQwODIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYyYjYyMTpjb206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNEV5cqLm-ujO-yN-_O4GCTASMGs03w)
- 23 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/cuantos-herodes-hay-en-venezuela-se-pregunta-el-personal-de-enfermeria-del-j-m-de-los-rios/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYASoTOTY0MTgzMDU1NzIwNjUxMTQwODIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYyYjYyMTpjb206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNHaPVU7mAwZ4HFid-q9IHewWWXhRig>

## Right to Proper Nutrition

### Hospitalized Children and Adolescents' Nutrition

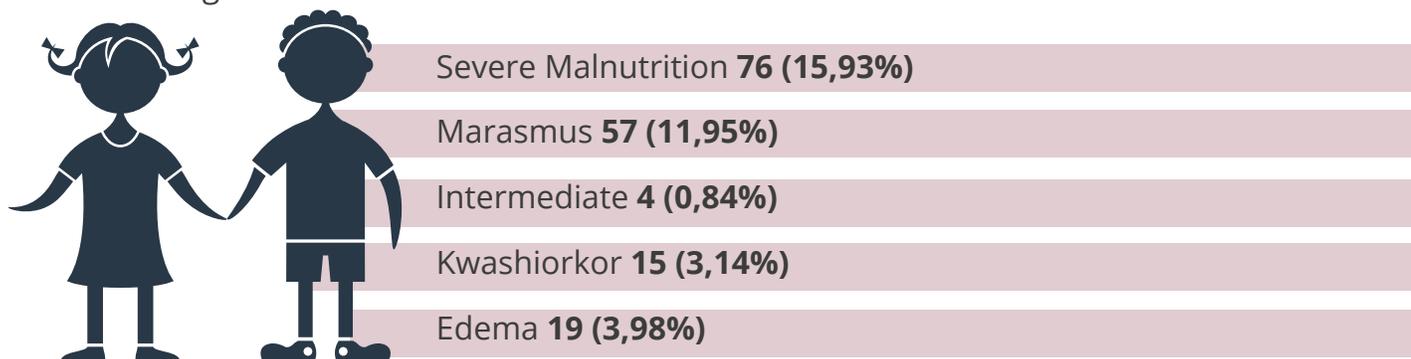
19. Hospitalized children in the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital and in most pediatric units in the country do not receive proper nutrition, they do not get the sufficient quantity nor the quality food that their health condition requires.<sup>24</sup>

Children continue to receive a simple arepa for breakfast, white rice or pasta with beans for lunch and dinner. No protein, salt, nor spices, because the Health Ministry does not supply any of that. Additionally, babies with HIV positive mothers do not receive children's formula.

### Malnourished Children and Adolescents

20. The Health Ministry does not deliver neither formulas nor nutritional supplements to the Hospital. It keeps ignoring standard nutrition protocols for hospitalized children. Getting proper nutrition is a challenge for all Venezuelans, but the most vulnerable Venezuelans suffer the worst consequences of this problematic situation.

On 2019, the nutrition, growing and development unit received 477 children through appointments, from which 394 (82,60%) were malnourished. Children from this group are categorized ahead:



Since March 16, the nutrition unit has been closed because Hospital appointments have been suspended. Hospitalized children, emergency cases or triage keep attending the Hospital.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/ya-no-hay-sobras-de-comida-iii/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTI3Mzk4NjY4NDAYNzI0OTIxMDAYGjc0NTY0OWZmMTc5MThlNTE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usq=AFQjCNFgIEQ-DQLiRfrwqMRySPAwonYGVg>

Since the beginning of the flexibilization period, the flow of children attending the Hospital has considerably diminished due to transportation limitations and lack of money.

On 2020, the nutrition, growth and development unit only received 227 children on first appointment, of which the total of children with severe malnutrition ascends to 109 children.

Most of children and adolescents suffering from chronic pathologies have remained in their homes during quarantine, where they can't receive the nutrition they require. Their families are very vulnerable and are not able to get the sufficient remuneration for their work, due to hyperinflation and the raise of the price of the dollar, which has dramatically risen the cost of basic goods during the pandemic.

## Breastfeeding

21. The breastfeeding service "Mi gota de leche" has remained closed during the pandemic. Additionally, before March 13, they were already dealing with staff shortages and terrible working conditions. They require relocation to a dignified space, with a proper staff and adequate supplies, to be able to continue promoting breastfeeding as a health strategy that guarantees ideal nutritional security and survival.

## Women Caregivers

22. Women caregivers (mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters) of hospitalized patients in the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital continue to suffer the impact of the nutritional emergency, as on April 5 2018 the food supply they received since August 2017 was suspended, and their further protests and demands were criminalized.<sup>25</sup>

Women caregivers (mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters) of hospitalized patients in the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital mostly come from the interior of the country. This is because they first go to their local health centers for help, which are unable to help them, so they have to travel to the Capital to get the care their children require.

25 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/lo-mas-reciente-de-este-6-de-septiembre-de-2020/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYASoTNDkyNTcyN-jczNTM0MjA3NTQ3NTIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNGaiHtFDnoVlnOMgOGdYLeVgs8zIw>

Forced to travel to Caracas, where the national reference center is located, and having to leave their other children under the care of family members, quitting their jobs or abandoning their education, meanwhile having no choice but to sleep on plain sheets, chairs or sofa-beds in a lousy condition.

They also do not have access to the Hospital's food court, health services, sanitary pads for menstrual hygiene (they're hard to get and expensive), nor contraceptives. Also, due to failures with the water supply they cannot use Hospital's bathrooms and many have suffered domestic violence. They are experiencing the feminization of poverty.

Since April 5 2018 the food supply delivered to women caregivers was suspended. They had received it since August 2017.

In this context, the gravity of the emergency that women were experiencing, deepened in many ways. Due to the problems mentioned above regarding gasoline access and public transport, hospital visits were suspended.

They do not receive any kind of support from their families, which used to bring them food or offer help for washing clothes, so they can have time to visit surrounding hospitals and clinics in search for places that offer the medical exams their children need and are not provided by the Hospital. They lack State assistance and experience extreme poverty conditions.

Additionally, many women caregivers of children and adolescents with chronic pathologies that receive ambulatory treatment in J.M. de los Ríos Hospital as chemotherapy, blood transfusions and special procedures, live in the country's interior and cannot easily mobilize for the reasons previously mentioned.

Many of them used to travel to Colombia in search for chemotherapies or protocols that are not available in Venezuela. Because of this, many children and their families of some units of the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital have migrated to other countries hoping to get the health services that they couldn't get in their country. Because of the poverty they endure, their travel arrangements turn out to be dangerous for their already vulnerable children.

Women that perform these caregiving tasks are not rewarded in any way for their intense continuous labor, they are overwhelmed in a particular way among so many limitations. Most of them do not receive any kind of economic support from the fathers of the children, nor from the State, also the pandemic has aggravated many of the already difficult conditions they had to deal with.

Confronting the difficulties of the pandemic, they demanded that the hospital's food supply service be reinstated. Quarantine has made transportation really difficult. They do not receive pensions or any other type of help. The response to their demands has been negative and the situation has only worsened since then.

## Children and Adolescents with Chronic Pathologies / Mobility / Shelter

23. Most children and adolescents with chronic pathologies that used to receive ambulatory treatment in the J.M. de los Ríos Children Hospital, have not been able to continue getting to the Hospital for chemotherapy sessions, blood transfusions, dialysis special procedures, since the beginning of quarantine.<sup>26</sup>

Most of these patients that live in the interior of the country or in the Metropolitan area of Caracas have not been able to mobilize due to failures in the gasoline supply, public transport deficiencies, checkpoints and other mobility restrictions.

The suspension of medical appointments prevents the monitoring of malnourished children and children with very severe pathologies. Practically only emergencies are being taking care of. A few units continue to care for urgent cases, mostly nephrology, oncology and hematology.

The restriction orders for containing the spread of COVID-19 have considerably worsen the health risks that vulnerable patients already experience. The most affected are patients with the more severe diseases, because every day without necessary care can represent an irreversible step back for an effective treatment process, an irreversible damage. Because of these reasons, exceptions must be made regarding mobility restrictions.

Women caregivers, which have to travel with their children during flexibilization weeks, must face severe difficulties. They are forced to pay with dollars, they must somehow get cash because bus drivers do not offer other ways of payment. Neither do they receive pensions or economic help, although some organizations support them through donors, paying their traveling expenses so that children can comply with the necessary treatment.

26 [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/pacientes-cronicos-llegan-al-j-m-de-los-rios-porque-compran-efectivo-para-el-pasaje-o-lo-pagan-en-dolares/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTI5NDY3OTkyNTg1Njk0NjA0NjYyGmY0Yzk0NmE3ZTk2M2I2MjE6Y29tOmVzOIVT&usg=AFQjCNFHb-CDWlx-ZTwzOCEFG\\_OkWLYII-oA](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/pacientes-cronicos-llegan-al-j-m-de-los-rios-porque-compran-efectivo-para-el-pasaje-o-lo-pagan-en-dolares/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTI5NDY3OTkyNTg1Njk0NjA0NjYyGmY0Yzk0NmE3ZTk2M2I2MjE6Y29tOmVzOIVT&usg=AFQjCNFHb-CDWlx-ZTwzOCEFG_OkWLYII-oA)

24. Private organizations' shelters that house women caregivers and their children, which are located around the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital, suspended their services since March 16 and, on December 30 2020, very few have resumed their services. These shelters provide housing and partial nutrition for children and adolescents experiencing ambulatory treatment.

In Caracas' metropolitan area only three shelters remain operational, housing a few families that were already staying there before the pandemic, only one of them has the means to receive six additional children, but without nutritional support.

Shelters provide an essential service for women caregivers that come from the interior of the country to receive ambulatory treatment in the Hospital, that is chemotherapies, blood transfusions and special procedures.

## Right to Public Services

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25. In J.M. de los Ríos Hospital the water supply keeps being irregular. In the middle of the pandemic, in which the principal hygiene measure is hand washing with water and soap, hospitals have spent weeks without running water, contributing to the proliferation of bacteria and the contagion risk, more so, when there's no running water, bathrooms are closed.

Closed bathrooms have a particular impact in this context because minimal personal and menstrual hygiene requirements cannot be fulfilled. Women caregivers must be alert for when running water service is resumed so they can fill the water tank located on the ground floor. When the few operational elevators malfunction, they are forced to carry water buckets up and down the stairs.

Equally, the suspension of running water puts the wellbeing of children at risk. Children that receive chemotherapies and blood transfusions, from hematology and oncology units, children with nephrotic syndromes, diabetes, HIV and chronic diseases in general, particularly suffer from the suspension of the vital service. In the appointments' tower there are no bathrooms for patients, which has forced some children to relieve themselves on hallways.

The staff does not have access to clean bathrooms either. During July, running water was suspended during three continuous weeks, since October there are only one or two hours of running water in the appointments' tower.

In the case of the dialysis unit, the tank which supports it must be filled with cisterns to avoid it being interrupted. Maintenance staff can only work when the running water service is available, also in most cases they are not provided with bleach, disinfectants or soap. Only at the beginning of December a special cleaning operation was performed thanks to a donation.

The 2019 National Hospitals Poll reports that 78% of public healthcare centers have had issues with the running water service. 70% of hospitals report having an irregular running water service and 20% lacks running water throughout the week.<sup>28</sup>

27 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://efectococuyo.com/salud/hospitales-de-caracas-permanecen-hasta-tres-semanas-sin-agua-en-la-cuarentena/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYASoTMTg4MTcxNzMyMDA5NzY5NTYyZjFhMzgwMTVlY2U3MTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNE2ODz9al17r8B-C0lpviO-DhCTGQ>

28 <https://elestimulo.com/hospitales-en-venezuela-sin-servicios-basicos-ni-insumos/>

## Electricity Service

26. Failures in the electricity supply persist in the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital. Although two electrical plants have been installed<sup>29</sup> they do not encompass neither the hospitalization tower, nor the isolation tower.

On April 24 2020 at 10:00 p.m., the main pediatric hospital in the country experienced a blackout. The electrical plant did not work, affecting two babies that were connected to ventilators in the emergency unit. At midnight, power had been 50% restored. It was completely restored during the following hours, in the morning of April 25. The failure only affected the Hospital. There were no blackouts in the surrounding areas. Thanks to the efforts of the staff, no fatalities resulted of this incident.<sup>30</sup>

On April 30, approximately at 4:50 p.m., there was another blackout. In this instance, one of the electrical plants restored partial functioning in the emergency unit of the Hospital. Both the hospitalization and the isolation tower, where children's rooms are located, remained in complete darkness until 9:10 p.m., when the service was restored.<sup>31</sup>

A month after these incidents, thanks to many complaints, a donated electric plant was installed. Additionally, a CORPOELEC (the government's electricity company) plant was installed, which had remained in the middle of the street since March 2019, when the national blackout happened.<sup>32</sup>

29 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://elpitazo.net/salud/corpoelec-reanuda-trabajos-de-instalacion-de-planta-electrica-del-j-m-de-los-rios/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTMTkwNzY4MzE1NzExMjM3ODYxOTIaZmQ1NjQ5ZmYxNzIxOGU1MTpj206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNEzp3TfuBqHFZXGN-SUxzrlxbISpXA>

30 <https://efectococuyo.com/salud/prepara-familia-j-m-de-los-rios-se-queda-sin-luz-y-la-planta-electrica-no-arranco/>

31 <https://www.eluniversal.com/caracas/69143/hospital-de-ninos-jm-de-los-rios-queda-sin-energia-electrica-por-casi-doshoras>

32 <https://efectococuyo.com/salud/nueva-planta-electrica-del-jm-de-los-rios-tiene-mas-de-un-ano-sin-ser-instalada/>

## Right to Education and Right to Recreation

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27. Since the beginning of the State of Alarm, hospitalized patients in the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital have not received educational sessions. Before the pandemic, they received a few hours a week, offered by teachers who received meager wages.

There are only a few educators willing to work at the Hospital, so children cannot be educated in their own rooms or in common areas. Children are forced to go down the stairs to the classrooms located in the first floor, taking into account that most children are not capable of going up and down the stairs at all. Likewise, courses aimed for adolescents are rarely offered.

28. At the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital there is no recreation unit, due to which private organizations assume that role. Since the beginning of quarantine, as the access to the Hospital was restricted, these organizations have not been able to keep fulfilling that function. Also, there are no cultural or recreational programs aimed at adolescents.<sup>33</sup>

## Diseased Children and Pathologic Anatomy Unit

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29. According to information collected in the time frame of this report, during quarantine, hospitalized children and adolescents have kept dying<sup>34, 35</sup>. On 2020 the number of diseased children has diminished because the number of hospitalized children has also diminished because of the pandemic and its implications.

The principal causes of death keep being the same ones: septic shock, pneumonia, severe malnutrition, respiratory insufficiency, sepsis, acute diarrhea and severe dehydration, the only new cause being COVID-19.

33 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/dona-musica-para-los-ninos-del-j-m-de-los-rios/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTE3NTM2N-DYxMzczNzM1OTk2MzYyGjc0NTY0OWZmMTc5MThlNTE6Y29tOmVzOjVt&usg=AFQjCNGo2Xk7isqkC0n0XwVE7xVki6Ssew>

34 <https://efectococuyo.com/salud/fallece-adolescente-del-servicio-de-nefrologia-del-jm-de-los-rios/>

35 [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.el-carabobeno.com/nino-fallecio-en-hospital-j-m-de-los-rios-a-la-espera-de-trasplante-de-ri-non/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTNjcyNzMDMDgwMDQ1OTkwMjc2MDIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpjb206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNGILn8WGFnSOvLm-B9a\\_fvq8Kyc24w](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.el-carabobeno.com/nino-fallecio-en-hospital-j-m-de-los-rios-a-la-espera-de-trasplante-de-ri-non/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoTNjcyNzMDMDgwMDQ1OTkwMjc2MDIaZjRjOTQ2YTdlOTYzYjYyMTpjb206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNGILn8WGFnSOvLm-B9a_fvq8Kyc24w)

Until December 31, 6 children had died of COVID-19. This data is not reflected in the State official registry of COVID-19 deaths.

Diseased children are not treated with dignity, due to improper conditions in the pathologic anatomy unit.<sup>36</sup> When several children die in a short period of time, the unit collapses. Until October only one refrigeration chamber was barely operational, not even complying with the basic sanitary conditions to provide proper service.

In the beginning of November, the refrigeration chambers of the pathologic anatomy unit began being repaired. As a result, the number of chambers increased to 5. They can only receive and deliver bodies, there are no autopsies nor any other exams being made.

During the pandemic, the families of diseased children have been forced to pay extra money to funeral houses (provided by civil society organizations) because the transportation costs have sky rocketed.

Neither the Hospital or the State provide any kind of help to the families of diseased children. Already struggling economically, they are forced to depend on a few civil society organizations, which provide support regarding mourning managing services, wake, burial services, cremation, additional funeral services and transportation of the bodies to their states of origin.

Additionally, due to transportation restrictions, proper wakes have not been performed, which are essential for the family's mourning process.

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/la-pandemia-agarra-a-los-hospitales-con-las-morgues-por-el-suelo/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoT-Njk4MjY0MTExNDIxMDQ2ODk3NTIaZnQ1NjQ5ZmYxNzkyOGU1MTpjb206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNE6u2\\_pcPxqOFXfyzP6Q8jaZI2f2Q](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://cronica.uno/la-pandemia-agarra-a-los-hospitales-con-las-morgues-por-el-suelo/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoT-Njk4MjY0MTExNDIxMDQ2ODk3NTIaZnQ1NjQ5ZmYxNzkyOGU1MTpjb206ZXM6VVM&usg=AFQjCNE6u2_pcPxqOFXfyzP6Q8jaZI2f2Q)

## Right to Access Health Information

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### Epidemiological Bulletin / COVID Numbers

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30. Without official information, it becomes impossible to generate public policy that has effective public impact when it comes to health matters. The country's epidemiological bulletin has not been made public since May 2017, when the Health Ministry published (on its website) its last bulletin of the last week of December 2016<sup>37</sup>. It did not only include information regarding the last week of that year, but the accumulated data from the whole year.<sup>38</sup>

The publication was accidental and caused the firing of Antonieta Caporale, who headed the Ministry at the time. This bulletin sounded the alarms by revealing the return to childhood mortality numbers of more than a decade ago: in 2016 11,466 children died, 30% percent more than in 2015.

Regarding COVID-19 numbers, published by the State on December 31 2020, Freddy Nájuez, the Minister of Communication and Information, informed that 1028 people died from COVID-19 out of 113,558 infections, during 2020 in Venezuela.<sup>39</sup>

Civil society organizations and news sites have made visible the numbers of health workers that have died of COVID-19, which had not been incorporated to the State registry. According to Efecto Cocuyo, the number goes up to 234.

In its last report of 2020, the "Médicos Unidos" organization indicated that the total number of health workers' deaths reached 295, of which 217 were doctors, 52 nurses and 26 from other areas of medicine.<sup>40</sup>

### Restrictions to the Access of Information and Documentation

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31. During the writing of this report, access to information and documentation has become even more difficult due to several variables: health staff, women caregivers and families being afraid of being criminalized for their demands, restrictions to hospital access, visitation and companionship of families.

37 <https://es.scribd.com/document/347856274/Boletin-Epidemiologico-el-Ministerio-del-Poder-Popular-para-la-Salud>

38 <http://venezuelasindatos.efectococuyo.com/>

39 <https://efectococuyo.com/coronavirus/venezuela-cierra-el-2020-con-1-028-fallecidos-y-113-558-personas-contagiadas-por-covid-19/>

40 <https://www.bancaynegocios.com/medicos-unidos-venezuela-2020-cerro-con-295-fallecidos-del-sector-salud-por-covid-19/>

## Right to Humanitarian Assistance and Protection of Rights

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### Safe-passage

32. Since 2019, United Nations' humanitarian architecture has been in place, until December 31, most of the approved projects had yet to be funded.

The UN's organizations participate in certain levels of the State decision making process regarding COVID-19 measures. On the other hand, civil society organizations dedicated to humanitarian work, registered in Venezuela, have no influence in the essential decisions needed to deal with the sanitary emergency.<sup>41</sup>

Organizations involved in humanitarian work need to guarantee the continuity of their operations and to the access to the vulnerable population to which their services are directed towards. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, they should be provided with safe-passage documents to allow them to mobilize to collect food and supplies donations. It is also necessary to be prioritized in the gasoline supply chain so that said donations can reach their destination on time. The average wait time in a gasoline line lies between 10 to 15 hours.

### Children and Adolescents Protection Systems

33. In this context, in which children's rights are being constantly violated, the weakening of the "Sistema Rector para la Protección de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes" has been clearly evidenced. According to the Organic Children and Adolescents Protection Law (LOPNNA), it's the maximum authority in the Venezuelan State for guaranteeing the rights and the integral protection of childhood in the whole national territory.

There have not been any public policy proposals nor plan or protection programs, directed towards the most vulnerable part of the population whose rights are being violated. There is no evidence that the most vulnerable population groups are being prioritized, when it comes to the need for essential healthcare resources.

The lack of institutional trust, in their structures as in their procedures, reveals the evident regression of the Integral Process Paradigm by which three decades ago Venezuela committed itself to respect children's rights, by subscribing to the Children's Rights Convention.

41 <https://efectococuyo.com/coronavirus/susana-raffalli-comunidades-y-actores-humanitarios-deben-ser-activados-en-esta-pandemia/>

One of the fundamental principles of the Convention is the Absolute Priority principle, which compels the State primarily, but also civil society and families, to ensure the protection of the rights of every child and adolescent.

That means that decisions and actions to guarantee their health must be prioritized, among which there is everything regarding education, wellbeing and full development of children and adolescents.

There cannot be any more excuses, limitations no dilations, other interests cannot come first to the adoption of necessary measures, the making of investments and the implementation of initiatives that ensure the protection, care, formation and stimulus to the expansion of childhood and adolescence in Venezuela.<sup>42</sup>

## Precautionary Measures

34. Precautionary measures as granted by the CIDH initially to children and adolescents in the nephrology unit on February 21 2018 and the widening of the precautionary measures to the children and adolescents in the other 13 units of the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital on August 21 2019, have not yet been fulfilled by the State.<sup>43</sup>

35. On August 6, the Interamerican Commission for Human Rights granted the widening of precautionary measures for Katherine Martinez, human rights defender and director of NGO Prepara Familia. Precautionary measures are granted by the CIDH in “urgent and severe” situations, with the objective of preventing irreparable damage. It stands out that she faces a severe situation due to the various harassment cases she has suffered because of her work.<sup>44</sup> The measure by the CIDH compels the Venezuelan State to adopt the necessary measures to protect the life and personal integrity of Katherine Martinez.

42 [https://ar-ar.facebook.com/REDHNNNA/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](https://ar-ar.facebook.com/REDHNNNA/posts/?ref=page_internal)

43 <https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.laprensalar.com.ve/nota/18365/20/07/alertan-incumplimiento-de-medidas-dictadas-por-la-cidh-pa-ra-el-jm-de-los-rios&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTMxNjcwNDk2MzkwMzAzMjg5OTcyGjc0NTY0OWZmMTc5MThlNTE6Y29tOmVzOIVT&usg=AFQjCN-GE4UUcQ4zFp8u9kPINBwQ5BxJE2Q>

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## Recommendations

In the frame of the COVID-19 pandemic, an exhortation is made to the immediate implementation of the following recommendations:

- a) Adopting necessary budgetary measures to guarantee the effective supply of medicine and vaccines to children and adolescents with chronic pathologies.
- b) Perform repairs and preventive and corrective maintenance labors to guarantee the functioning of medical equipment, necessary to provide essential care to children and adolescents.
- c) Formulate, taking into account the opinion of multilateral organisms from civil society, an exhaustive plan of multiannual immunization against immuno-preventable diseases, as for an immunization plan against COVID-19, with especial focus on children and adolescents with chronic pathologies and the family members who take care of them.
- d) Supply the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital (and all other public hospitals in the country) with biosecurity equipment, hygiene conditions and necessary medical service to properly deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- e) Guarantee the availability of public services such as drinking water, electricity and gasoline in the country's public hospitals, with special attention payed to pediatric units.
- f) Creating, in every public hospital in the country, isolated medical units to deal with new patients, and also specific work teams to provide primary care for children sick with COVID-19.
- g) To immediately cease the persecution and criminalization of the health staff and family members of patients who have denounced severe failures in sanitary protocols.
- h) Apply the necessary measures to reactivate and maintain the chronograms of chemotherapies and dialysis, as for the hematology, oncology and nephrology units, which cannot be suspended because of the devastating damage that will cause patients depending on them.
- i) Making the necessary repairs and maintenance work (preventive and corrective) of beds, elevators, stretchers and wheelchairs to guarantee the mobility of hospitalized patients, particularly focusing on pediatric units.
- j) Reactivate the Organ Seeking Program in the country and constituting bone marrow transplant units that comply with the normative parameters.

- k) Guarantee the supply of immunosuppressors for transplanted patients, with special focus on children and adolescents.
- l) Establishing gasoline supply plans and transportation for the health staff of the institution, as well as dignified salaries that allow for the appropriate exercise of their profession.
- m) Guarantee the adequate nutrition (regarding both quality and quantity) to children and adolescents, in accordance with their respective health conditions, as well as formulas and nutritional supplements
- n) Regularly publishing data and exhaustive indicators about health and nutrition, classified by sex, age, pathology, place of residence, of the hospitalized children and adolescents in the country's public hospitals.
- o) Establishing an integral attention plan for women caregivers (mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters) of hospitalized patients, and to immediately cease the criminalization of their demands.
- p) Along with civil society organizations, to work for the reactivation of shelters that house children and adolescents and their mothers in the surrounding areas of the J.M. de los Ríos Hospital, guaranteeing the necessary conditions for its functioning.
- q) Resume the Hospital's education services, providing classrooms, materials, proper wages for teachers and sufficient staff for taking care of hospitalized children and adolescents.
- r) Establishing a cultural/recreational attention program for hospitalized children and adolescents, and also guaranteeing the creation and maintenance of the adequate spaces for said purposes.
- s) Guaranteeing the dignified care of diseased children and adolescents, informing about the causes and circumstances of their death and economically helping their family members during the wake and burial process.
- t) Publishing and divulging sanitary bulletins that permit the establishment of adequate public policies that have effective and efficient effect in the health sector.
- u) Guaranteeing safe access to health centers, without restrictions, to organizations that assist, accompany and support hospitalized children, adolescents and their families.

COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on Hospitalized  
Children and Adolescents with Chronic Diseases in Venezuela



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