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Speak Out Now

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Covid-19: A Capitalist Pandemic

The Trump administration's criminal failure to act and to coordinate a response to the coronavirus pandemic has created a healthcare disaster. Early on, when information was coming from China, Trump said that the virus was not a threat and it would soon go away. For weeks, he and other politicians stood by while the virus spread.

As it moved through Iran and parts of Europe there was no coordinated U.S. plan to deal with its possible spread. They didn't act quickly to provide or produce necessary equipment and supplies for the healthcare system. When the virus hit the Seattle area, there was no program of mass testing to see where it was concentrated and to track its spread.

The recommendations of scientists and the medical community have been ignored. There is still a lack of mass testing. As a result there is no accurate way to assess the overall problem. Trump claims that without his efforts, the U.S. death toll would reach 2.2 million. He says he will be happy if it is only 100,000. What a disgrace!

Meanwhile, in some states, people went to the beach, celebrated Mardi Gras, and attended large church services before officials finally banned such gatherings. Most state and local officials watched and waited while the epidemic turned into a pandemic. Later Andrew Cuomo, governor of New York, Newsom of California and others have been really trying to respond. But too little and too late means sentencing people to death.

The vast majority of the trillions of dollars of congressional aid is going to the corporations and banks. Only a small amount is actually going to aid ordinary people. With 10 million now officially unemployed, what is a \$1200 check going to do? How will millions survive with no ongoing support, both now and when the crisis subsides?

This crisis is hitting the poorest members of society the hardest. Twenty-seven million people have no healthcare at all. Many more are underinsured. And, there is a move to dismantle the little support the Affordable Care Act provides. The homeless, the imprisoned, and the undocumented are facing a catastrophe.

Having insurance doesn't mean access to care. The hospitals were already understaffed. Healthcare workers don't have the necessary protection and are facing an epidemic in their own ranks. Basic equipment, like respirators and ventilators, don't exist. Of course those who control the corporations didn't quickly mobilize to produce the needed equipment and supplies. The drug companies waited on major product development. They don't produce things unless they can profit. Trump refused to use the Defense Production Act to force them to produce the necessary medical supplies and equipment.

As a result, healthcare workers, other first responders and workers in other essential services continue to be forced to work in unsafe, dangerous and risky conditions. These workers and other workers – in transit, restaurants, supply chains and other production – have been speaking out. Some have organized strikes and protests to force a change in their potentially deadly working conditions.

This crisis has shown that those in charge are unwilling and incapable of protecting us. They have no right to have control over our health and lives. How could we not feel outraged and ask ourselves what can we do? We know who really does all the work of this society – to grow food, process and deliver all the goods, run transit, communication and all the vital services, provide healthcare and education. How dare those in power today try to force us to sacrifice our lives for their greed. We have to organize and use our power to resist!