

Defending democracy, the right to health, life and the SUS: agenda of the Free, Democratic, and Popular Conference

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THE FRONT FOR LIFE (FPV) WAS CREATED IN MAY 2020, by organizations, entities and social movements involved in the fight for the right to health given the neglect of the federal government in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Acting initially on the health crisis, the FpV has a strong political articulation in addition to presenting to Brazil technical and propositional suggestions to face the pandemic in health, economic and social strategies. The realization of the fragility and dismantling provided by the federal government to the Unified Health System (SUS) and the country's political perspectives, including the elections that will take place this year, have expanded the Front's commitments to the inclusion of health in the Brazilian development project that will be up for debate in the coming months.

In this perspective, the FpV decided to carry out a broad national mobilization to debate and build proposals for the health sector. On April 7, as part of the celebrations of World Health Day, the Free, Democratic, and Popular National Health Conference was launched. This free conference underway in the country has already been mobilizing several social movements in preparatory events, and its final stage will be held on August 5, 2022 (National Health Day).

In addition to interfering in the electoral debate, the Free Conference is part of the preparations for the 17th National Health Conference, which will take place in 2023, thus constituting the beginning of a great mobilization with a view to resuming the construction of the universal right to health with the full consolidation of the 100% public, comprehensive, and universal SUS. One of its main goals, therefore, involves including health at the center of discussions of the popular democratic program, under construction in the country, which will oppose the ongoing project of dismantling the State, social rights, and the environment with a systematic attack to Brazilian democracy^{1,2}.

The defense of democracy, of the universal right to health, of life, and of the SUS are guidelines that drive the FpV, reflecting the principles and guidance of the entities that comprise it; among them, our Brazilian Center for Health Studies (CEBES). The call for the Free, Democratic, and Popular National Health Conference points to the same direction, from which a strong accumulation of popular power is expected, one that is capable of sensitizing national society to the importance of health, advancing the political project of the Brazilian Health Reform Movement whose central role is undeniable in the conquest of health as a right for all and a responsibility of the State in the Federal Constitution of 1988 (CF/88).

Revisiting the chapter of the CF/88 on health, the Front reinforces and guides that the Free and Popular Conference is oriented by guidelines based on the expanded understanding of

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health, a product of social accumulation and translated into collective good living with justice and equality. As a result of a complex process of social, economic, and environmental determination, health can only be guaranteed if it is articulated with a democratic development project that preserves the environment, ensures rights, and places the economy at the service of life^{1,2}.

The process of democratization in Brazil has been showing its weaknesses, particularly in recent years of strong threats to democracy. More than ever, it is necessary to reaffirm that the struggle for health is linked to the struggle for democracy. Fighting for democracy, for the universal right to health, for life, and for a SUS that is 100% public, universal, comprehensive, and of quality is to resume the fight that has been waged since the 1970s and 1980s, which led to the redemocratization of the country after 20 years of military dictatorship. It is honoring the struggle that led to the National Constituent Assembly and affected the CF/88, expanding workers' rights, including social security, creating our health system, and guaranteeing social participation in the conduct of public policies.

They are different moments that dialogue in the opposite direction: then, the fight was to get out of a 'leaden years' dictatorship, now, the fight is to prevent it; then, the task was to build the expanded bases of social security for the universal right to health and the SUS, now the fight turns against the dismantling of social rights and the SUS; then, the economic model of agribusiness and the unlimited exploitation of nature was an initial project, now it is the hegemonic model of agricultural production, responsible for the imbalance of the flora and fauna and for the resurgence of diseases; then, participation and social control gained prominence, now they are criminalized by an authoritarian and fascist-inspired government that wants to perpetuate itself in power.

Such context requires a great articulation of the democratic field, aiming at a new social pact and the construction of a national project, which has as its horizon: the reduction of the enormous social inequalities; a new model of development that is sustainable, sovereign, that preserves nature, and is geared towards the needs of the population and future generations, and not towards private interests that plunder our wealth. A project for the reconstruction of the State to guarantee rights, such as the right to health, housing, education, social security, and a dignified and safe life, without violence and without discrimination. That is the expectation regarding the Free Popular Conference!

That political commitments and national awareness be strengthened regarding the essential universal right to health translated into a set of social, economic, and environmental policies. That the commitment and defense of the consolidation of the universal SUS, 100% public, financed with sufficient and adequate resources from social security be strengthened; that mechanisms be identified that guarantee, throughout the national territory, equal access of the population to health networks and health actions and services; guarantees of essential changes in the management of work and in the construction of a new alliance between workers and users of the SUS. These are central themes to be debated by the Free, Democratic, and Popular, National Health Conference on Health, from which new paths are expected to advance in the consolidation of a fair and democratic Brazil.

Collaborators

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