

## **French Nursing Homes Employees Protest Pay, Conditions**

By The Associated Press

- May 25, 2020

PARIS — Employees of a major group of French nursing homes on Monday took part in protests across France to call for better pay amid the coronavirus crisis.

Protesters gathered outside homes owned by the Korian group in Paris, Lille and other French cities in response to a call from several far-left unions.

The government is formally opening on Monday two months of talks with health care workers over changes to France's public health system, which has suffered from decades of cuts.

Korian is one of the market leaders in the provision of care for older adults. It has more than 850 facilities in Europe, employing more than 53,000 people and caring for 300,000 people in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Netherlands and Spain.

In France, where Korian manages nearly 300 care homes, the group is facing several lawsuits filed by families who have lost loved ones during the coronavirus pandemic. Prosecutors have opened police investigations.

France has recorded more than 14,000 COVID-19 deaths among nursing home residents, accounting for nearly half of the country's total of more than 28,300 deaths.

Facing anger from health care workers, President Emmanuel Macron promised a "massive" investment plan for France's public health sector.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe acknowledged there had been "a lot of criticism" over how the government had prepared French hospitals in the years leading up to the coronavirus pandemic, as he launched initial talks to prepare the new health plans on Monday.

Philippe pledged that health workers would see a "significant" salary raise in what he promised to be a "radical" review of the French health care system. Further details will be unveiled in July.

Philippe said coronavirus had made it clear a "change of pace" was needed with regard to the system.

The government said that all staff working in public hospitals and nursing homes in the regions hardest hit by the virus will get a 1,500-euro (\$1,632) bonus from the state.

Doctors and nurses have long denounced low salaries, staffing shortages and overwhelmed services in hospitals.

**The New York Times**

[www.nytimes.com/aponline/2020/05/25/business/ap-eu-virus-outbreak-france-nursing-homes.html?searchResultPosition=1](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2020/05/25/business/ap-eu-virus-outbreak-france-nursing-homes.html?searchResultPosition=1)

Before the virus crisis, emergency room workers held strikes and protests for months demanding more hiring and funding.

—

Follow AP pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>