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Panama: Physicians Organize Strike

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Oct. 25, Miguel Calobrides, general secretary of the social security system physicians' association (Asociacion de Medicos de la Caja estatal del Seguro Social), told reporters that about 3,000 MDs plan a 48-hour work stoppage beginning Oct. 28. The objective of the strike is to protest expected revisions to social security legislation. Calobrides pointed out that the policy changes are part of package of conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in order for the government to receive loans to refinance its foreign debt. In addition to revisions in the social security code, the national congress is expected to approve a privatization law and several tax reforms before Nov. 15. The two multilateral institutions threatened to suspend negotiations if the government paid the "13th month" bonus. The bonus was suspended in 1989 and reestablished this year by the Supreme Court of Justice. (Basic data from Agence France- Presse, 10/25/91)

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