

# **Global Union Federation, ICEM, Calls for Defeat of Thai Public Health Amendments**

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The 20-million-member International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Union (ICEM) is lending its support to the Government Pharmaceutical Organisation Local Union (GPOLU), and its allies, in calling for defeat of draft legislation that would effectively, privatise Thailand's pharmaceutical drug industry

The ICEM is in full support of a manifestation on Monday, November 12, at the Ministry of Public Health in Nonthaburi. That rally, beginning at 13h00, is being organised by GPOLU, the Confederation of State Enterprise Unions (SERC), and allied consumer and civil society organisations. The ICEM encourages Thai citizens to attend.

"We lend the name of the global trade union for all chemical and pharmaceutical workers to defeat this bill," said ICEM General Secretary Manfred Warda. "We believe that removing the government as a provider of essential health needs, in any form, is a recipe for higher costs, with a bigger portion of the population going without adequate health care."

In a letter to be read at the manifestation, the ICEM pledged to stand with the GPOLU as they "prevail upon current government ministers and lawmakers ... that government procurement of pharmaceuticals, first and foremost, must benefit Thailand's citizens."

The ICEM, representing 384 trade unions in 118 countries, will be holding its 4<sup>th</sup> Congress, 22-24 November, at the Queen Sirikit Convention Center in Bangkok. Some 880 trade union leaders from national unions representing workers in the oil, gas, mining, chemicals, pharmaceutical, and processed industries such as pulp, paper, cement, rubber, glass industries will attend the ICEM's quadrennial Congress.