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COVID-19 in Croatia

The fourth wave of the epidemic in Croatia, mostly caused by the delta variant, began in late August. The number of newly infected is growing daily and in last 10 days we have between 1400 and 1800 newly infected per 24 hours.

According to the official data of the Croatian Institute of Public Health, on September 18, 2021, there have been 1.455 new recorded COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours; 14 % of them were vaccinated, while of the 9 deaths, 8 were not vaccinated and the vaccinated person had severe comorbidity; 658 people are still hospitalized with 80 patients on ventilator.

Since beginning of the pandemic (February 25th 2020) total of 391.109 people infected with coronavirus was recorded in Croatia. **So far** 8.493 people passed away.

Total of 2.933 (18,75%) doctors, 8.113 (24,07%) nurses and 3.655 (18,6%) other healthcare workers were infected with coronavirus, while 2 doctors and 7 nurses passed away from the beginning of the pandemic.

The current incidence for Croatia is 323.8. According to the incidence of the infected, Croatia is on the 23rd place in the list of EU countries, while according to the incidence of mortality of 2,087.6 per million inhabitants, it is on the 20th place on this scale.

Official data is available at www.koronavirus.hr and updated daily.

Vaccination

As of September 12, 2021, 43,37% people were vaccinated in the Republic of Croatia with one dose, and 40,66% were fully vaccinated. So far, 84,16% of doctors and 62,01% nurses were vaccinated with one dose, and 78,86% doctors and 56,15% nurses were fully vaccinated.

The Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia warned that the pool of about 40 percent of non-immune people in Croatia is sufficient for the spread of the delta variant of the virus and that the largest number of dead and seriously ill people is unvaccinated.

Restrictions

The National Civil Protection Headquarters has prescribed a Decision on Necessary Epidemiological Measures Restricting Assemblies and Recommendations to Prevent the Transmission of COVID-19 Diseases, which remain in force until the end of September 2021.

Measures to maintain physical distance, maintain hand hygiene and disinfection, and wear face masks in certain enclosed spaces are continuously in force. Masks are mandatory for all health care workers, employees of social care providers, drivers, other employees in public transport vehicles

and public transport passengers, and employees in catering facilities. Restrictions on the number of persons at private and public gatherings are prescribed.

A strict measure of physical distancing requires avoiding close personal contact at a distance of at least 2 meters indoors and 1.5 meters outdoors. It is mandatory use of masks when it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 1.5 meters outdoors and 2 meter indoors

From the end of August, at the suggestion of local headquarters, targeted measures are adopted at the local level, most of which related to restrictions on the number of people at weddings, funerals and other private gatherings, measures to organize larger events, bans on visits to hospitals and nursing homes and banning audiences at sports competitions.

According to the decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, starting from October 1 2021, all health care workers must have a COVID certificate when coming to work, and those who do not have it will have to take a PCR test once a week. Testing will be free at first. It has not yet been decided when employees will pay for the testing themselves.

Crossing the state border

Rules for entering Croatia depend on where are passengers coming from (directly from the countries and/or regions of the European Union or from the third countries).

In general, EU Digital COVID Certificate is required for passengers when crossing the state border. In addition, **negative PCR test result or rapid antigen test result - RAT**, certificate that they have received two doses of vaccine used in the EU Member States or one dose of the vaccine if the vaccine is administered in a single dose and certificate showing that they have recovered from COVID-19 and have received one dose of vaccine, could be required.

Passengers arriving from the countries that are in the list of countries to which special epidemiological measures apply which are published on the website of the Croatian Institute of Public Health, are obliged to present a negative PCR test result not older than 72 hours and they have to stay in mandatory self-isolation for 14 days (Republic of South Africa, Zanzibar (Tanzania), Brazil).

Although the workload of Croatian doctors is currently not as hard as it was in the third wave of the pandemic, Croatian doctors are still very angry at the Government's decision from December 2020 on the shamefully low- so-called -COVID award (which is 66 cents more per hour for subspecialists!).

A few days ago, the Government of the Republic of Croatia finally adopted a decision to pay the debt to doctors for overtime hours, which have not been adequately paid since 2013.

As I reported earlier at FEMS meeting, more than 4.000 doctors initiated lawsuits for this problem 3 years ago. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of doctors almost a year ago, but so far, the government has done nothing to solve this problem and refund us that debt.

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