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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

16 JULY – 22 JULY 2022

EU HEALTH COMMISSIONER: WE MUST CONTINUE OUR JOINT EFFORTS TO CONTAIN THE PANDEMIC, WHILE PREPARING FOR THE AUTUMN AND WINTER SEASONS

In her recent letter, Stella Kyriakides urged the EU member states to step up preventive public health actions, underlining that it is crucial to carry on with “close vigilance” and implement the relevant measures recommended by the Commission last April.

Parallely, on Monday (18 July), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) warned that COVID-19 infections in the EU have been growing for the last five weeks, which signals the start of a prevalent wave led by the BA.4 and BA.5 variants. Based on updated recommendations, a second booster dose should be administered for persons aged 60 and over, as well as for people of any age with pre-existing medical conditions putting them at high risk of severe disease.

According to ECDC Director Andrea Ammon, “there is an urgent need to establish robust, integrated surveillance systems that are sustainable and resilient should a new pandemic arrive, and the availability of several safe and effective vaccines means every single COVID-19 infection prevented now is a potential life saved.”

Source (ECDC recommendations): <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/ecdc-releases-publications-covid-19-vaccination-strategies-and-joint-ecdc-who-report>

Source (article): <https://www.euractiv.com/section/coronavirus/news/eu-health-chief-calls-countries-to-step-up-covid-measures-ahead-of-autumn/>

EU4HEALTH PROGRAMME FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE FOR THE UKRAINIAN HEALTH SYSTEM

The Ukrainian government and the EU Commission have signed a document associating Ukraine with the EU4Health programme, as a part of Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides' visit to Kyiv. The agreement will enable Ukraine to apply for EU funding in the area of health.

Thanks to this historic step, the Ukrainian authorities and stakeholders from the healthcare sector will be able to benefit from the funding opportunities under the EU4Health programme on equal terms as their counterparts from the EU Members States, as well as Norway and Iceland.

The EU4Health programme, with a total budget of €5.3 billion for 2021-27, is implemented through annual work programmes, but the newly signed agreement will enter into force retroactively from 1 January 2022, thus enabling Ukraine to start participating in funding opportunities immediately under the EU4Health Work Programme 2022. The funds for Ukraine will support immediate combat-related damage and finance Ukrainian public and private projects helping with Ukraine's post-war reconstruction. As regards mental health support, €9 million from the EU4Health Programme has already been mobilised to assist those forced to escape Ukraine.

Source: <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-society/3529881-ukraine-signs-agreement-with-eu-to-participate-in-eu4health-programme.html>

EU SECURED OVER 54,000 ADDITIONAL VACCINE DOSES AGAINST THE MONKEYPOX VIRUS

On Monday (18 July), the EU Commission announced that Health Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) secured 54,530 doses of the 3rd generation vaccine produced by the company Bavarian Nordic, bringing the total number of purchased doses to 163,620.

As monkeypox cases in the EU countries almost doubled within a week, Commission decided to order a sufficient number of vaccine doses to promptly respond to the potential progression of the widespread of this virus. Nevertheless, vaccines will not be used for mass immunization, but rather be available to particular risk groups. A spokesman of the Commission has explained that since the virus spreads via close skin-to-skin contact, “transmissibility of the risk from the virus is not comparable, for instance, with the risks that we know in the context of COVID.”

So far, around 25000 vaccines have been distributed to six EU member states: Germany received over 5000, Spain 5300, Belgium 3400, Sweden 2700, Ireland 1400 and Italy over 1000. But the deliveries are ongoing and will continue over the coming weeks and months – guided by the case rates observed in particular countries.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-secures-over-50000-additional-doses-bavarian-nordics-monkeypox-vaccine-2022-07-18/>

Thank you for your attention!

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