

Dutch repurpose Eurovision venue to host virus patients

April 14 2020

A Dutch concert hall that was set to host this year's Eurovision Song Contest will instead welcome patients suffering from coronavirus from Friday.

Where thousands of fans were supposed to cheer on contestants in the long-running competition next month, the Ahoy Arena in Rotterdam is now filled with 88 hospital beds to ease the burden on hospitals.

A special hall has been set aside for patients suffering from COVID-19 who need treatment but do not need to be hospitalised.

"Some people are no longer able to survive at home and must be taken care of as ordered by their doctors. We'll soon be able to receive them here in Ahoy," said Saskia Baas, director of the Rotterdam region's public health service (GGD).

People who "can no longer be properly cared for in their own care centres or [retirement homes](#)" could also be welcomed, she said during a press tour.

Officials decided to convert the Ahoy Arena last month after Eurovision was cancelled for the first time in the event's 64-year history.

"We were in full preparation for the Eurovision song contest," said Arjen Littooi safety and security director for the Rotterdam region.

"We suddenly and quickly had to adapt to the crisis."

The Netherlands is one of the few countries in Europe yet to impose a total lockdown to contain the [coronavirus](#) pandemic.

Some 27,419 infections have been reported with 2,945 deaths, according to the latest count released on Tuesday.

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Citation: Dutch repurpose Eurovision venue to host virus patients (2020, April 14) retrieved 18 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-dutch-repurpose-eurovision-venue-host.html>

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