

Italy's intensive care virus cases drop for first time

April 4 2020



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Italy saw its first drop Saturday in the number of patients receiving intensive care treatment for the coronavirus that had stretched the Mediterranean country's world-class healthcare system to breaking point.

Civil protection service chief Angelo Borrelli called the [drop](#) from 4,068 on Friday to 3,994 on Saturday in the number of critical patients an important moment in Italy's battle against COVID-19.

"This is a very important data point because the figure is decreasing for the first time," Borrelli told reporters.

"It is important because it allows our hospitals to breathe. This is the first time that this figure has fallen since we started managing the emergency."

Borrelli also cast figures showing Italy's death toll rising by 681 to 15,362—officially higher than in any other country—in a positive light.

"This figure is constantly decreasing," he said.

"I want to remind you that (on March 27), we almost had 1,000 dead."

Italy recorded 969 deaths that day—a record that stood until the United States reported nearly 1,500 fatalities between Thursday and Friday.

The daily rise in new infections across Italy has also slowed to just four percent.

But Italian officials are still not declaring victory and instead are preparing the country for at least another month of life under a general lockdown.

The drop in critical care patients "is a strong signal but it should absolutely not be read as a sign that we have overcome the critical stage," the government's scientific council head Franco Locatelli said.

"It shows that the measures that we have been applying have had

success."

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