Big jump in Italy's daily new cases driven by travel

August 8 2020, by Frances D'emilio

In this file photo migrants sit on the quay after disembarking at Lampedusa harbor, Italy, on June 29, 2019. Small boats filled with more Tunisian migrants have reached a tiny Italian island, which had no room to quarantine them Saturday, Aug. 1, 2020, amid the pandemic. Sicilian daily Giornale di Sicilia quoted Lampedusa Mayor Toto' Martello as saying the island can't wait until the government sends a ferry as promised so they can be safely isolated for 14 days

as part of anti-COVID-19 measures. (AP Photo/Annalisa Camilli)

The number of daily new coronavirus infections in Italy jumped 38% higher Friday, with 552 confirmed cases registered compared to the previous day.

Italy hadn't seen a such a high daily new caseload since late May. Barely two weeks ago, Italy had been registering roughly 200 new cases a day.

The northeastern region of Veneto, which performed nearly 16,500 swab tests in a day, registered roughly a third of those new cases—183.

Veneto Gov. Luca Zaia said the new infections were found in residents who recently returned home from Spain, Peru, Malta, Croatia and Greece.

"Vacations are a risk," he said in his daily briefing. "Everyone must decide where they want to go on vacation, but it's also true, that by us, for a couple of weeks now, we're seeing a concentration of patients who were infected on vacation."

Northern Italy is where Italy's outbreak began in February, and which registered the highest number of cases and deaths throughout the pandemic.

But recently, many other clusters of infection have been occurring in central and southern Italy. Most of those cases have been linked to foreigners returning for work at farms or restaurants or hotels or to migrants rescued at sea.

A passenger of a bus coming from Romania, leftt, undergoes a voluntary Covid-19 blood test, at the Tiburtina bus station, in Rome, Wednesday, July 29, 2020. The Lazio region, which includes Rome, is beginning voluntary tests on passengers arriving in Italy from Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine, with a blood test on finger with results in 8 minutes followed by swab test if result is positive. (AP Photo/Riccardo De Luca)

Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, right, with Economy Minister Roberto Gualtieri, left, announces the latest set of measures under another emergency decree during the coronavirus pandemic, Friday, Aug. 7, 2020, in Rome, Italy. (Claudio Peri/Pool Photo via AP)

Three more deaths were registered on Friday, raising Italy's confirmed pandemic toll to 35,190. Experts say numbers from all countries are undercounts, due to limited testing, missed cases and other issues.

Italian authorities have also been trying to crack down on night life in tourist spots like the islands of Capri and Ponza or in bar districts in cities including Rome, Milan and Naples. Italy requires masks to be worn outdoors if social distancing can't be maintained. Many outdoor cafes and bars have attracted crowds of young people, most not wearing masks.

The Italian Health Ministry says the average age of infected persons in recent weeks has dropped to 40, compared to about 61 during the early days brunt of the pandemic.