

Mexico lets governors obtain vaccines for their own states

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City worker Alexis Hernandez delivers a tank of oxygen to a COVID-19 patient, in the Iztapalapa borough of Mexico City, Friday, Jan. 15, 2021. The city offers free oxygen refills for COVID-19 patients. (AP Photo/Marco Ugarte)

Mexico's pandemic cases continued at a high level Friday as President Andrés Manuel López Obrador gave state governors permission to

acquire coronavirus vaccines on their own.

Officials reported just over 21,000 newly confirmed [virus infections](#) a day after the country listed a record 22,339 cases. Deaths related to COVID-19 in the previous 24 hours reached 1,440, compared with a record 1,803 reported Thursday.

Mexico's [federal government](#) has received about 750,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine so far, with almost 600,000 administered. The country has 750,000 front-line medical personnel, all of whom will need two doses, or about 1.5 million shots.

That points to a long wait for Mexico's 130 million people, and state governors and the [private sector](#) have been pressing the government to allow them to acquire vaccines on their own. López Obrador said Friday that they will be allowed to do so, as long as they inform [federal officials](#) and use only approved vaccines.

"We are acquiring vaccines, but it would be petty to tell those who want to help that they won't be allowed," López Obrador said.

The Mexican Employer's Federation welcomed the decision, saying that "the goals of the national vaccination strategy can only be met through coordinated action between the government, state governments and the private sector."

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