

# Paris hospitals told to make room for COVID emergencies

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Hospitals in the Paris region have been ordered to cut all non-COVID patient care and surgery by 40 percent as new virus cases risk overwhelming their intensive care capacity, health authorities said on

Monday.

The Ile de France greater Paris region, which counts about 12 million inhabitants, currently has 973 COVID patients in intensive care compared with a capacity set aside for virus cases of 1,050, the director-general of the ARS regional health service, Aurelien Rousseau, told AFP.

"This is a very tense situation," he said.

Since a spike in the number of virus infections two weeks ago, daily admissions into intensive care have been between 70 and 80 patients, but only half that number at most were being discharged, leading to a daily net increase of 35.

At that [growth rate](#), current hospital and clinic COVID capacity will be exhausted as early as this week.

"We needed to react very fast," said Rousseau, who gave "a firm and immediate order" to cancel 40 percent of scheduled hospital care.

The move will take capacity to 1,577 COVID [intensive care](#) spots by next week, he said.

The order comes as the French government has been scrambling to avoid another national lockdown although COVID infections remain stubbornly high.

On Sunday 21,825 new cases were reported in the previous 24 hours and 130 new deaths.

Vaccination centres stayed open at the weekend as Prime Minister Jean Castex called for "a national mobilisation" to boost the number of

inoculations.

So far France has administered around 5.5 million doses of the three vaccines authorised for use—Pfizer/BioNtech, Moderna, and AstraZeneca/Oxford University—according to government figures.

On Monday, Industry Minister Agnes Pannier-Runacher said that weekly vaccine deliveries to France would go above two million doses within two weeks.

This meant that 30 million people—two thirds of the French adult population—could be vaccinated by the end of June, she said.

As the country waits for vaccinations to make a dent in infection statistics, the government has resorted to regional weekend lockdowns, with the latest one affecting hundreds of thousands of people in the north of the country.

There has been speculation about a similar move coming for the greater Paris region, but so far the government has appealed to people to behave responsibly, and police banned the consumption of alcohol outdoors in the capital to try to reduce the crowds gathering to enjoy the spring sunshine.

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