

Chile authorizes Sinovac vaccine for kids of 6 and older

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In this July 26, 2021 file photo, students walk past games that are off limits at a school where gradual, voluntary, in-person classes have restarted for a second time this school year amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Santiago, Chile. The South American country's health authorities have approved Monday, Sept. 6, 2021, the use of Sinovac vaccine against the coronavirus for 6-year-old children and older, the first Latin America's country to take that step. Credit: AP Photo/Esteban Felix, File

Chilean health authorities approved on Monday the use of the Sinovac vaccine against the coronavirus for 6-year-old children and older, the first Latin America's country to take that step.

Heriberto García, director of Chile's Public Health Institute, said the institution approved the new measure by five votes in favor and one against.

Now, the Health Ministry has to determine dates and the mechanism to start vaccinations.

The approval was taken in a moment that the South American nation has fully immunized more than three-fourths of its adult population.

Catholic University of Chile is currently conducting a study with 4,000 children aged 3 and 17 to study the Sinovac effects on them. But García said the experts at the Public Health Institute based their decision on a review of information given by the Sinovac laboratory and information published in medical journals.

In Latin America, a few countries have approved only the Pfizer vaccine for children 12 and older. China has authorized Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines for children ages 3 to 17.

Few regulators around the world have evaluated the safety of COVID-19 shots in kids, but the approvals are starting. The United States, Canada, Singapore and Hong Kong are all allowing the use of the Pfizer vaccine in children as young as 12.

Chile has reported more than 1.6 million COVID-19 cases and more than 37,100 deaths.

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