

Sweden's pandemic response faulted as too slow, unprepared

October 29 2021



In this Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021 file photo, a member of the nursing staff prepares for patients to receive a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, in the Blue Hall of the Stockholm City Hall, in Stockholm, Sweden. Sweden, which has stood out among European nations for its comparatively hands-off response to the pandemic, has announced that it will be offering a third shot to people 65 and older as well as health care and nursing home workers. Social Affairs Minister Lena Hallengren said Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 that 1.5 million Swedes will

receive a booster dose six months after the second vaccine shot. Credit: Jonas Ekstromer/TT News Agency via AP, File

Sweden's response to the spread of coronavirus was too slow and its preparations to handle a pandemic were insufficient, a stinging official report concluded Friday.

The Scandinavian country has stood out among European nations for its comparatively hands-off response to the pandemic, emphasizing individual responsibility and choices instead of mandated government health measures.

In its preliminary findings, the new report said Sweden's initial protection measures were "insufficient to stop or even sharply limit the spread of infection," and that its solution to counter the outbreak "was based on voluntariness and [personal responsibility](#), rather than more intrusive measures."

It added that Swedish laws were "insufficient to deal with a serious epidemic or pandemic outbreak," and that the country's infection control system was decentralized, making "it unclear who is responsible for the whole when a [serious infectious disease](#) affects the country."

Earlier this week, Sweden passed the threshold of 15,000 deaths with COVID-19.

Social Affairs Minister Lena Hallengren told Swedish news agency TT that she agreed with the criticism, saying it "could have been done differently."

The latest report was along the lines of a December 2020 one that said

the center-left Swedish government failed to sufficiently protect the elderly in nursing homes from COVID-19 and was ultimately responsible for the pandemic's effects.

In neighboring Denmark, 1,784 news cases of COVID-19 were recorded Friday, the 10th day in a row where the number of people newly infected in Denmark has been over 1,000.

The Danish Patient Safety Authority said it was reactivating its coronavirus Task Force in the capital of Copenhagen, which saw most of the new cases. The [task force](#) had shut down in June.

Due to the large number of vaccinations in Denmark, the government dropped most of its coronavirus restrictions on Sept. 19.

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Citation: Sweden's pandemic response faulted as too slow, unprepared (2021, October 29)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-10-sweden-pandemic-response-faulted-unprepared.html>

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