Ukraine registers record daily number of COVID-19 deaths

October 26 2021, by Yuras Karmanau

A train conductor checks the Covid Certificate of passengers, at a train station in Kyiv, Ukraine, Ukraine, Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021. Coronavirus infections and deaths in Ukraine have surged to all-time highs amid a laggard pace of vaccination, which is one of the lowest in Europe. Credit: AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky

Ukraine reported another record daily number of COVID-19 deaths Tuesday as vaccinations in the nation of 41 million people lags.

Ukraine's Health Ministry registered 734 deaths in 24 hours, raising the country's pandemic death toll to 64,936.

Ukrainians can freely choose between the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Sinovac vaccines, but just about 16% of the population has been fully vaccinated, Europe's second-lowest rate after Armenia.

The government has responded to a steady rise in confirmed cases and deaths in recent weeks by tightening restrictions. Starting last Thursday, proof of vaccination against the coronavirus or a negative test was required to board planes, trains and long-distance buses.

On Tuesday, Enerhodar in southeastern Ukraine became the first Ukrainian city to halt public transportation due to the number of drivers refusing to get vaccinated as required by city authorities.

Amid the travel restriction, a black market for counterfeit vaccination certificates has blossomed, prompting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to hold a meeting last week on ways to uproot the illegal practice.

To encourage more people to get vaccinated, authorities have started offering shots in shopping malls. Health Minister Viktor Lyashko said Tuesday that Ukraine now is giving about 250,000 jabs a day, which is he said is the same number previously administered in a month.

Lyashko acknowledged that widespread vaccine hesitancy remained a challenge. About half of Ukraine's medical workers have been reluctant to get immunized, he said.

People wait for their turn in a vaccination center before boarding a train at a train station in Kyiv, Ukraine, Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021. Coronavirus infections and deaths in Ukraine have surged to all-time highs amid a laggard pace of vaccination, which is one of the lowest in Europe. Credit: AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky

People take an antigen-test for COVID-19 before boarding a train, at a train station in Kyiv, Ukraine, Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021. Coronavirus infections and deaths in Ukraine have surged to all-time highs amid a laggard pace of vaccination, which is one of the lowest in Europe. Credit: AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky

People take an antigen-test for COVID-19 at a train station in Kyiv, Ukraine, Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021. Coronavirus infections and deaths in Ukraine have surged to all-time highs amid a laggard pace of vaccination, which is one of the lowest in Europe. Credit: AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky

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