

Germany mulls new COVID-19 measures as infections spike

November 11 2021, by Kirsten Grieshaber



Red Cross worker Motasen Edrees stands in front of a tent at City Hall where he performs Corona rapid tests in Biberach, Germany, Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2021. Biberach County has the highest seven-day incidence in the country, with more than 500. Credit: Stefan Puchner/dpa via AP

Germany reported a record-high number of more than 50,000 daily

coronavirus cases on Thursday as lawmakers mulled legislation that would pave the way for new coronavirus measures.

The Robert Koch Institute, Germany's national disease control center, registered 50,196 new cases, up from 33,949 daily cases a week earlier. Infections have multiplied so quickly in recent days that hospitals in the hardest-hit regions canceled scheduled surgeries to allow medical personnel to focus on COVID-19 patients.

The institute also reported 237 daily COVID-19 deaths, bringing Germany's pandemic death toll to 97,198. One of the country's top virologists, Christian Drosten, warned on Wednesday that another 100,000 people could die in the coming months if the country's vaccination rate didn't accelerate quickly.

Unlike some other European countries, Germany has balked at making vaccinations mandatory for certain categories of workers and has struggled to persuade more people to voluntarily get shots.

At least 67% of the population of 83 million is fully vaccinated, according to official figures.

"In Germany, I must say, unfortunately, that our vaccination rate isn't high enough to prevent the fast spread of the virus," Chancellor Angela Merkel said late Wednesday.



In front of the weekly market, a sign points out the Corona measures in Biberach, Germany, Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2021. The district of Biberach has the highest seven-day incidence in the country, with more than 500. Credit: Stefan Puchner/dpa via AP

Vice Chancellor Olaf Scholz who is likely to take over as chancellor echoed Merkel, telling lawmakers that everything must be done to get more people vaccinated.

"The virus is still among us and threatening our health," said Scholz. "We must make sure that vaccinations are conducted and that they are conducted at high speed."

A caretaker national government has governed Germany since a

September parliamentary election. The three parties that are expected to form the new government are looking to replace a March, 2020 "national epidemic" declaration at the end of the month with new legislation for enacting COVID-19 measures.

Scholz announced that the three parties - his own Social Democrats, the Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats - plan to re-open vaccination centers across the country so that people can receive booster shots swiftly.

Other virus measures include free tests, daily or frequent testing at nursing homes and schools and tougher enforcement of measures.



People walk through the main shopping street in Frankfurt, Germany,

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2021. Germany's national disease control center reported a record-high number of new coronavirus cases Wednesday as one of the country's top virologists warned that another lockdown would be needed if vaccinations do not quickly accelerate. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst

Germany has had a patchwork of regional rules throughout the pandemic. Most places permit access to many indoor facilities and events only to those people who have been vaccinated, have recovered from COVID-19 or had a recent negative test.

Scholz said both he and Merkel agreed that the federal government and all 16 states need to meet again next week to find common solutions on how to counter the infection spike.

"That is what we need now: for the country to stick together and pull in one direction so that we can get through this winter," said Scholz.

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