

In Greece, unvaccinated people 60 and up face monthly fines

January 17 2022, by Derek Gatopoulos



An elderly man wearing a face mask to curb the spread of coronavirus, walks past Athens' municipality building and in front of the statue of the ancient statesman Pericles of Athens' Golden Age, on Monday, Jan. 17, 2022. Greece has imposed a vaccination mandate for people over age 60, as coverage remains below the European Union average and while a recent spike in infections has sustained pressure on hospitals. Credit: AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris

Greece imposed a vaccination mandate Monday for people 60 and older as a spike in infections has put sustained pressure on Greek hospitals, where most of the seriously ill patients belong to that age group.

Older people failing to get vaccinated will face penalties, starting at a 50-euro (\$57) fine in January and followed by a monthly fine of 100 euros (\$114) after that.

About 69% of Greece's 10.7 million people are fully vaccinated, just under the EU average of 70.3%. COVID-19 deaths and daily hospitalizations in Greece have increased following the arrival of the highly contagious omicron variant, although the overwhelming majority of people in the hospital or dying of the virus have the delta variant. Pressure on ICU capacity has eased slightly.

Health Minister Thanos Plevris said the fines would be collected through the tax office with the money going to help fund state hospitals.

"The age factor is important because of its impact on the public health service," Plevris told private Open TV on Sunday.

Greece imposed a vaccination mandate for health care workers last year. And starting Feb. 1, vaccination certificates for adults will expire after seven months unless the holder receives a booster shot.

New infections surged sharply in early January but have eased over the past week.



A man wearing a face mask to curb the spread of coronavirus, sits on a bench as pedestrians walk outside Evangelismos hospital in Athens, Greece, Monday, Jan. 17, 2022. Greece has imposed a vaccination mandate for people over age 60, as coverage remains below the European Union average and while a recent spike in infections has sustained pressure on hospitals. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



An elderly woman wearing a face mask to curb the spread of coronavirus, walks in central Athens on Monday, Jan. 17, 2022. Greece has imposed a vaccination mandate for people over age 60, as coverage remains below the European Union average and while a recent spike in infections has sustained pressure on hospitals. Credit: AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris



A woman wearing a face mask to curb the spread of coronavirus, exits from a Greek Orthodox church in Athens, Greece, Monday, Jan. 17, 2022. Greece has imposed a vaccination mandate for people over age 60, as coverage remains below the European Union average and while a recent spike in infections has sustained pressure on hospitals. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis



Three elderly men wearing FFP2 face masks to curb the spread of coronavirus, sit on a bench in Athens, Greece, Monday, Jan. 3, 2022. Italy, Spain and other European countries are re-instating or stiffening mask mandates as their hospitals struggle with mounting numbers of COVID-19 patients. Credit: AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis, File

The vaccination mandate for the 60 and older age group was announced in late December and, according to government data, 41.5% of the 530,000 people targeted by the measure are now fully vaccinated.

Opinion polls suggest strong public support for the mandate, but some lawmakers across party lines have questioned the legality of singling out a specific group. The government defended the measure as constitutional, citing a 2020 high court decision allowing public day care

centers to refuse children who had not been vaccinated for childhood illnesses.

Government spokesman Giannis Oikonomou said only people with legitimate health exemptions, those who had suffered a recent infection and applicants for home vaccination appointments that were delayed would be spared the fine.

"The law will be fully enforced," Oikonomou said.

Greece has the seventh oldest population in the world, as measured by share of residents aged 65 and over, according to the U.S.-based Population Reference Bureau. It has seen nearly 22,000 virus-related deaths in the pandemic.

© 2022 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: In Greece, unvaccinated people 60 and up face monthly fines (2022, January 17) retrieved 9 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-greece-unvaccinated-people-monthly-fines.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--