

Italy requires coronavirus vaccines for people 50 and older

January 6 2022, by Frances D'emilio



People sit by the Rome's Piazza del Popolo Lions fountain, Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022. The Italian Government is expected to hold a cabinet meeting with scientific and medical experts Wednesday, to apply new measures to cope with the surge of new COVID-19 cases in the country. Credit: AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia

The Italian government approved a measure Wednesday requiring people older than 50 to be vaccinated against the coronavirus, as the country struggles with nearly daily new records of fresh infections fueled by the omicron variant.

Earlier in the day, 189,000 new infections were confirmed in the country of some 59 million people.

"We want to put the brakes on the growth of the curve of contagion and push Italians who are still not vaccinated to do so," Prime Minister Mario Draghi was quoted by an official in his office as telling his ministers at a Cabinet meeting Wednesday evening.

The Cabinet voted unanimously to impose the mandate, which Public Administration Minister Renato Brunetta said puts Italy in the vanguard in Europe in cracking down on those who refuse to be vaccinated and who now account for the majority of patients in Italy's rapidly filling ICU beds.

Some 78% of Italy's population is fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, which can cause COVID-19. So far, about 36% have received a booster shot, which experts say is a crucial instrument in reducing the possibility that an infection will necessitate [intensive care](#) or be fatal.

Draghi said the decision to require vaccination for [older persons](#) was taken out of concern that they are at more risk for hospitalization and "to reduce the pressure on hospitals and save lives."



People stroll along the Via del Corso avenue in Rome, Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022. The Italian Government is expected to hold a cabinet meeting with scientific and medical experts Wednesday, to apply new measures to cope with the surge of new COVID-19 cases in the country. Credit: AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia

It was not immediately announced what if any penalty non-vaccinated older persons might face. But Health Minister Roberto Speranza told reporters that anyone 50 or older will be checked to see if they have a "super green pass" before they enter their workplaces. That certification is reserved to those who are fully vaccinated or who have recently recovered from COVID-19.

The workplace requirement for [older workers](#) in both the public or private sector takes effect Feb. 15. That date would presumably allow

time for workers to become fully vaccinated if they aren't now.

The Cabinet also decreed that anyone working in universities must be vaccinated, regardless of age. Currently, vaccination is required for school teachers, [health care workers](#), members of the military and [police forces](#), regardless of age.

Also adopted was a requirement that anyone working or obtaining services in beauty parlors and similar establishments have a negative virus test if they aren't vaccinated or haven't recently recovered from COVID-19. The same rule will apply to stores in shopping malls and to banks and post offices. Those working or patronizing pharmacies or food stores will be exempt.

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