

Germany OKs more COVID-19 vaccine spending for this fall

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German Health Minister Karl Lauterbach attends the cabinet meeting of the German Government at the chancellery in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, May 18, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Markus Schreiber

Germany plans to spend another 830 million euros (\$872 million) to buy

new coronavirus vaccines that will allow the country to deal with a series of possible variants this fall, the health minister said Wednesday.

Health Minister Karl Lauterbach said that the government, via the European Union, already has ordered enough of the existing vaccines and of one that has been developed by Germany's BioNTech to counter the [omicron variant](#). He said the new funding is earmarked for a vaccine being developed by Moderna to tackle both omicron and other variants.

"We are betting on a broad portfolio of vaccines; we must be prepared for all eventualities," Lauterbach said. "We don't know what variants will confront us in the fall."

"One lesson from the pandemic is that we never again want to have too little vaccine," he added, alluding to the sluggish start early last year of the EU's and Germany's COVID-19 vaccination campaign. "We want to be able to offer all those who need or want it a fourth shot."

The minister left open, however, whether a fourth vaccine shot will be recommended for everyone, saying that will depend on what variant comes later this year.

The existing recommendation from Germany's independent vaccine advisory panel, issued in February, calls for an additional booster for people aged 70 and above among other [high-risk groups](#), including residents of nursing homes, people with immunodeficiency and [medical staff](#).

At present there is little demand for vaccinations in Germany, with an average of only 48,000 shots administered per day over the past week. So far, only 5.6% of the population has received a second booster shot.

However, Lauterbach said that vaccination centers will be kept open and

given a maximum 100 million euros per month in federal government funding.

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