

REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**Press Release**

**Initial statement by the Minister of Health Mr. Constantinou at a press conference on developments concerning the pandemic**

Dear Members of the Press  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to thank you for your presence here today and let me once again praise the contribution of the Media to the efforts for keeping the public responsibly informed about the unprecedented health crisis that plagues the whole planet.

The purpose of today's Press conference is to inform the public on the latest developments about the coronavirus, so that we may collectively and responsibly brace ourselves to meet the challenges which we might be called upon to face in the coming period.

The epidemiological picture we have in Cyprus is satisfactory but also an extremely fragile one. The multiplication of cases was anticipated and we certainly expect that as we draw closer to winter the number of new outbreaks will remain steady or it might even increase.

What is of special concern to us is the analysis of the outbreaks, which in many cases unfortunately shows that proper observance of hygiene protocols is lacking. From the data one discovers that many of the outbreaks that are located have to do with cases where the cross infection or the spreading of the virus could have been avoided had more attention been paid to the instructions. For this reason it must be understood that until a vaccine or a treatment against the virus are found, responsibility for its containment is in the hands of every one and each of us. Our protection shield remains the triptych, HANDS, MASK, and DISTANCE, which must become a way of life for all of us.

As the Administration we have made the protection of Public Health our first priority from the start and in this context we planned our strategy, which we update in accordance with developments.

Our strategy for combating the virus continues to rest on the following three main pillars:

- Large number of tests in the community, within high risk groups and at the points of entry to the Republic,
- Thorough tracing of cases in order to isolate close contacts, and
- Monitoring the hygiene protocols and informing the public.

In addition, we take targeted measures for certain sectors and geographical areas, where clusters of outbreaks are detected. We would like to recall that additional measures were implemented last August in Limassol, while localized measures are in force in the Districts of Larnaca and Famagusta.

At the same time we are entering a period of increased seasonal infections and therefore our planning takes into account all the parameters that will coexist in the coming period with the coronavirus. Tentatively, I can mention the plan for the vaccination coverage of the population against Flu A, which starts next Monday, since the first quantities of jabs have already been delivered, while the vaccination against pneumococcus is in progress.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following the recent increase of outbreaks, fears for a setback are becoming more intense. It is a loud warning which may lead to non - reversible situations if we ignore it. We see this happening in most countries and if we do not learn from their suffering we will end up with mathematical certainty in the same unwelcome scenario. We are perturbed by incidents with outbreaks that show symptoms for days, yet they fail to take a test, persons who test positive for the virus with many close contacts but do not state all of their contacts, resulting in valuable time being lost and making the work of tracing difficult.

With the risk of being repetitive, I make yet another strong appeal to everybody to be particularly careful, bearing in mind that it is exclusively up to us to reduce the spreading of the virus. The adoption or not of additional measures depends only on our own behaviour and attitude.

Many times we have described this effort as a marathon race. It calls for patience and perseverance from all of us, because a new resurgence and relapse can easily occur.

The planning of the measures decided by the Council of Ministers are long reaching until January so as to facilitate the citizens and their families, the professionals, companies and organizations to programme their events and other activities. Observing the self-protection measures and implementing the protocols will enable us to come out of this crisis with as few losses as

possible, without additional turmoil and inconvenience. Our strategy aims precisely at maintaining low and manageable levels of outbreaks and intake of patients in hospitals and Intensive Care Units, thus safeguarding the Health System and Public Health.

Once again we ask the public for their cooperation. We rely on the individual and collective sense of responsibility that distinguishes the overwhelming majority of our society. I ask you to not let us lose control of the situation for there will be no return.

Everything depends on our own behaviour.

Our lives are in our hands.

Allow me, before taking your questions, to give the floor to the experts who will brief you on the various parameters of the pandemic and the actions taken by us.

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Ministry of Health  
7 October 2020