

## **Vaccination is our main weapon to exit the health crisis**

Approaching the target set for vaccination of the 65% of the population that can be vaccinated within June, until the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, vaccination shielding with the first dose reached 57,6% and the percentage of the population that completed their vaccination scheme amounts to 37,9%.

With the Vaccination Plan against COVID-19 evolving on a planned basis, arrangement of appointments through the Vaccination Portal continues this week as well. Specifically, until 5:30 yesterday afternoon, people of 18-22 years old had priority for arranging an appointment. Today, Friday, 11 June, from 7:30 in the morning until Monday, 14 June, 5:30 in the afternoon the Vaccination Portal will be available for people of 40 years old and over who haven't scheduled their vaccination until now. The planning of the Ministry of Health for the following weeks is the opening of the Vaccination Portal initially for the ages of 18-39 and then for all the beneficiaries over 18 years old.

Given that the new strains of the virus have proven to be much more contagious, preventing community spread is done through the more widespread vaccination of the community. The goal is to achieve herd immunity, which will offer protection and allow the return to a more functional normalcy, with more restriction lifting and greater security.

The positive results from the vaccination coverage are already visible in our country, having brought on great improvement in epidemiological data in the past weeks. In age groups where vaccination coverage is at an advanced stage, a significant drop is recorded in the number of cases and in the percent positive. This percent positive in penitentiaries is under 0.1%, the result of timely vaccination of the senior citizens residing in these facilities.

Among the positive aspects of vaccination is the decrease in hospital admissions, especially of older people. As can be seen from the data, vaccinated persons, even after one dose, are either asymptomatic in case of infection, or present much milder

symptoms and therefore do not require hospitalization, thereby not placing strain on the Healthcare System.

The benefits from the vaccination are multiple at the current stage of dealing with the pandemic. The fact that vaccination coverage is increasing, **contributed to the improvement of epidemiological indicators** and allowed for **the lifting of most of the restrictive measures, as well as the gradual and safe restart of the economy and social activity**. Due to the respond and trust shown by the majority of the population towards the vaccination programme, among other, venues reopened, like nightclubs that have been shut for over 15 months, dining areas/restaurants reopened, and children's activities restarted.

Consequently, the declining course of the epidemiological indicators, led our country into the ECDC's Orange Category, and that will be **beneficial for various aspects of the economy, especially the tourism sector**.

Society's devotion in following the personal protection measures and the citizens' positive response to the call for vaccination, constitute the key for exiting the pandemic.

-----

10.06.2021