

## **The objectives of the National Vaccination Plan are being achieved – More than 64,000 vaccines have been administered by the 23<sup>rd</sup> February**

Cyprus is heading towards the completion of one of its main objectives regarding the vaccination coverage of the population for COVID-19. Specifically, and according to the initial target set in December, Cyprus ranks in the first places among the member states of the European Union in terms of the vaccination, at least in administering the 1<sup>st</sup> dose of the vaccine, to people aged 80 and over. Having prioritized the protection of the health of the elderly, and following the recommendations of the European Commission to shield this vulnerable group of the population, the National Vaccination Plan, in addition to its short-term objective of protecting the elderly, has as a medium-term objective of reducing hospitalizations and deaths and disburdening the Health System.

Within this framework, Cyprus is one of the first countries to reach the European Union target of vaccinating at least 80% of the health professionals by March, while it is one of the countries that have already started vaccinating high-risk groups. At the same time, the Ministry of Health, in order to protect bedridden persons, has introduced a procedure for their vaccination at home or at their place of residence, through mobile vaccination units.

The priority of the Ministry of Health is to protect high-risk groups of the population through the National Vaccination Plan, since according to a [study](#) of the Scottish Public Health Centre, the results of almost 1.5 million vaccinations showed that a dose of Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines is effective and significantly reduces hospitalizations. According to the same study, by 4<sup>th</sup> week after receiving the 1<sup>st</sup> dose, the Pfizer and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines were shown to reduce the risk of COVID-19 hospitalization by up to 85% and 94%, respectively. Regarding people aged 80 and over, which is one of the highest risk groups for serious illness, vaccination was associated with an 81% reduction in the risk of hospitalization during the 4<sup>th</sup> week, when the results for both vaccines were combined. Equally encouraging are the data recorded in a study conducted in Israel, according to which the Pfizer vaccine is by 95.8% effective in preventing infection two weeks after the vaccination with the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose, 99.2% in preventing severe forms of the disease and 98.9% in preventing death. At the same time, a [British study](#) showed that the risk of infection with the virus is reduced by 85% after the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.

### **More than 64,000 vaccinations by February 23<sup>rd</sup> in Cyprus**

The Vaccination Plan is progressing smoothly and the country is accelerating the process, by increasing the vaccination coverage of citizens and vulnerable groups, along with vaccination by age. By February 23<sup>rd</sup>, **a total of 64,562 vaccinations** have been administered, out of which **44,239 concerned those who had received the 1<sup>st</sup> dose of the vaccine and 20,323 who had completed their vaccination (2<sup>nd</sup> dose).**

The vaccinations are carried out in nine Vaccination Centres in all districts, by a total of 20 units. Two big Vaccination Centres are operating, in the State Fair, Lefkosia, and in the «Spyros Kyprianou» Athletic Centre in Lemesos with a capacity of 15 and 10 units, respectively. Vaccination Centres will start operating in Pafos and Larnaka this week, with a capacity of seven units each. With Vaccination Centres operating in full capacity, up to 15,000 vaccinations per day can be administered.

It is reminded that so far, the European Medicines Agency has licensed three vaccines, AstraZeneca, Pfizer's Comirnaty and the vaccine by Moderna, which have passed the safety and efficacy bar. As usual practice, our country obtains vaccines approved by the European Medicines Agency, as the competent authority of the EU for the evaluation, approval and licensing of pharmaceutical products. In view of the licensing of the Johnson&Johnson vaccine in March and according to the information provided by the manufacturers, it is expected that in March, more than 160,000 doses of the three vaccines will be sent, with the flow increasing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the year.

**Summary data on vaccination:**

- By February 23<sup>rd</sup>, a total of 64,562 vaccinations have been administered, out of which 44,239 concerned persons who had received the 1st dose of the vaccine and 20,323 who had completed their vaccination (2nd dose).
- The vaccination of people aged 71 and over is in progress.
- The vaccinations are carried out in nine Vaccination Centres in all districts, from a total of 20 units. Vaccination Centres will start operating, this week, in Pafos and Larnaka. With Vaccination Centres operating in full capacity, up to 15,000 vaccinations per day can be administered.

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