



HEALTH UPDATE

Omicron sneaks in old's people homes and infects 11 residents from three centers

The covid reinfection rate in 2021 was 3.56%, affecting 767 people out of 20,747

Using the FFP2 mask will be mandatory at events, health centers and health centers

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The Cedre, Clara Rabassa and Salita social and health centers once again have positive coronavirus residents.

After the detection at the beginning of the week of a woman infected in the Cedar, and through the diagnostic tests that are usually done in these centers, the social health managed by the SAAS confirmed the positivity of two more residents, as well as two nurses, an assistant, and a cleaning worker. In fact, given that all seven were linked to the same floor, it has been decided to temporarily restrict visits and outings to those staying in this area. Fortunately, the three residents are asymptomatic and are well, according to Health Minister Joan Martínez Benazet at a press conference after the Council of Ministers. The five residents who were detected in Salita and the three of Clara Rabassa, who were isolated in their respective centers and did not intend to move them to the covid area of the Cedar because they did not show symptoms and any risk. «Thanks to the third dose of reinforcement, we see that the impact of the omicron variant is absolutely controllable,» said the minister.

As for the rest of the epidemiological data, Benazet detailed that 357 new cases had been detected in the last 24 hours, out of a total of 28,899. Discharges totaled 23,394 and 141 deaths. There were also 5,364 active cases, of which 25 were admitted to the Hospital Nostra Senyora de Meritxell: 13 on the ground floor and 12 in the ICU, eight of which were ventilated. In this sense, the head of Health highlighted the «progressive and slow decrease» of the pressure on the whole hospital and intensive care. And still in relation to the hospital, the minister shared that there were currently 127 SAAS workers on sick leave, corresponding to 10% of the workforce, although only 53 (4%) were on leave.

Benazet also took advantage of the appearance to specify the data on coronavirus reinfection in the Principality during 2021. Thus, Health has registered 767 people with more than



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► The Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet, at a time in his appearance.

one episode related to the covid of the 20,747 infected during the year, corresponding to a 3, 56%. Specifically, 763 people have had it twice and four people, three.

107 POSITIVES AMONG SCHOOLCHILDREN// Regarding the school population, the minister explained that the scre-

Benazet highlights the «gradual and slow decline» in pressure at the hospital, where there were 25 hospitalized

enings had made it possible to detect the first two school days after the Christmas holidays, a total of 107 positives in the 3,228 tests carried out. As a result, class attendance increased to a total of 44 classrooms: one with full active supervision and one with partial supervision.

Regarding the vaccination campaign, the head of Health stated that 143,778 vaccines have already been administered in Andorra, corresponding to 57,617 first doses, 56,743 second and 29,418 third. It should be noted that, according to Benazet, people up to the age of 26 were already being summoned to receive the third dose. The minister also clarified the guidelines now being applied by the ministry in charge of vaccine management, stating that all those people who had the complete guideli-

nes and were infected with the delta variant (those positive before Christmas approximately), the third dose would be inoculated after one month «to prevent omicron reinfection.» On the other hand, anyone who has the complete guideline and has been infected with the omicron variant will be cited for the third vaccine three months later, «as has been the case so far.» In any case, the government will be waiting for the evolution of the case of this virus strain around the world, especially in countries such as South Africa or the United Kingdom, where the variant arrived earlier.

To close the news on vaccines, the French ambassador to Andorra, Jean-Claude Tribolet, said yesterday that «Franco-Andorran cooperation» in vaccines was being maintained, and noted that the French country had

sent 10,000 drugs. Moderna at the end of the year, and a new delivery was pending soon.

As a last resort, the Executive issued a decree that enters into force today and until the 19th which states that it will be mandatory to use FFP2 masks when attending as a public cultural and sports activities in indoor spaces, in visits to health centers, and to attend health centers and manor houses. However, the BO-PA also issued a decree empowering the government to establish restrictive or exceptional measures for the coronavirus pandemic until March 12, although it requires the favorable agreement of the General Council. The official bulletin also included the emergency purchase of three respirators for the ICU, at a cost of 67,500 euros. ≡

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COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Jover calls Lopez a «populist» for his housing statements

Minister Spokesman doubts that the PS has realistic proposals, beyond «big announcements and criticism»

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Yesterday, Minister of Education Eric Jover accused the president of the Social Democratic Party (PS), Pere López, of being a «populist» for his statements on the housing crisis. On Tuesday, López appeared at a press conference to describe the policies promoted by the government as «disastrous», stating that «we are governed by the families of the great real estates», in reference to the presidents of the parliamentary groups of the majority. The Social Democrat leader also said that in the last three years the Executive has been «speculating [...] instead of thinking about the social majority in the country asking for a rent that suits the needs of everyone». Statements that for Jover are part of an «extremely populist campaign», although he challenged López to debate it in the General Council and see «how he dresses», as in his opinion beyond big announcements and criticism there are no realistic proposals.

In the same appearance of the PS, the secretary of organization, Pere Baró, also considered that the management of the Government in the matter of house is «ultraliberal», considering that the taxes have been reduced without any commitment with the lower rental prices. In this sense, the Minister Spokesman defended himself, pointing out that «we are trying to be pragmatic and carry out programs» that help to solve a problem that is «very important and that concerns and worries us».

It should be noted that on Monday the Social Democrats also pro-



▶▶ Aerial view of the central valley.

The latest survey by the Observatory showed that concern for rent had soared by 47%

posed an investment of 45 million euros, 33 of which would come from budget items and 11 from the empty housing tax, for the creation of more than 400 publicly owned social flats over the next four years in order to «reverse current policies» and «respond to a problem as sensitive as this,» according to Baró. The same party believes that the measure «would be a solution for more than 350 family units in the country while causing a drop in rental prices of between 5% and 10%».

Finally, it should be remembered that the price of housing, especially rent, is one of the main concerns of citizens, according to the latest survey by the Observatory of Andorra Research and Innovation. In fact, this concern skyrocketed by 47% compared to the latest study - focusing mainly on the pandemic and its economic and social consequences - with the population aged 18 to 29, of Portuguese and Andorran nationality, and with unskilled professions the most anxious about it. ≡

The government has confirmed that inflation will continue to rise

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After the 2021 CPI has been set at 3.3%, a figure above the Government's forecast (+ 1.4%), the Minister of Spokesperson, Eric Jover, confirmed yesterday that, despite the difficulty of predicting inflationary behavior is estimated to be a sustained increase in prices over the first half of 2022, although «during the second half it seems that pressures will fall». It is clear, therefore, that this 2021 closure «will have

With the rise in the CPI on minimum wage is rising now up to 1,157.87 euros

an impact» and a «direct impact» on government spending in various areas, such as the wages of public workers or indexed contracts. However, the Executive states that «it is acceptable with the flexibility of state accounts.»

Jover explained that 3.3% of the CPI for 2021 is mainly marked by the transport, clothing and footwear (+ 5.6%) and catering (+ 3.3%) sectors. With this increase, the minimum interprofessional wage becomes 1,157.87 euros per month. ≡

Mobility during Christmas falls 18%

Andorra registered the entry of 201,000 vehicles during the Christmas festivities. Of these, 138,000 did so along the Runer River border, while 64,000 entered the country on the French side. As confirmed yesterday by the Minister of Spokesperson, Eric Jover, these data represent a decrease of up to 18% compared to 2019-2020, a season that according to the Government was the best since these data are recorded. For this reason he noted that with respect to the 2018-2019 season, which was «more similar», there is an increase of 12%.

Andorra presides Electoral Group I

Andorra is chairing Unesco's Electoral Group I this year. The Principality has never chaired this group since it joined the United Nations in 1993, and is now taking over for the first time. In fact, the first meeting will take place today. Electoral Group I is a group that manages the issues related to the elections of the Member States in the different organs of Unesco. It is also responsible for coordinating positions on political issues, centralizing Secretariat messages, and may even develop strategies.

Calendar for training courses

Yesterday, the Council of Ministers approved the Decree on the calendar of professional training courses in industrial safety, energy and the environment for the year 2022. The trainings are promoted with the collaboration and involvement of the Ministries of the Presidency, Economy and Business and Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability, the Association of Electricity, Plumbing and Air Conditioning Companies of Andorra (Adelca) and the Official College of Engineers of Andorra (COEA). Registration can be done in the Forest building, on the Obac road in the capital.

Five new bachelors in music

The government approved yesterday the creation of five titles related to music: bachelor in music composition, bachelor in music direction, bachelor in music performance, bachelor in musicology and bachelor in music pedagogy. These studies were created at the suggestion of Humanium International University. The qualifications are national in nature and are structured on the basis of the cycles established within the framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and referenced in the Andorran Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

Out of school returns

The Executive gave the green light yesterday to re-allow the activities and outings of younger students outside schools, given that «classes and canteens work in groups of coexistence,» in the words of Minister Spokesman Eric Jover. It should be remembered that, until now, outings were restricted to sports or cultural activities, as this measure was taken to curb the incidence of covid-19 in classrooms, which just before the Christmas holidays especially affected the primary education courses.