



HEALTH UPDATE

Health rules out fourth dose as population is “more protected”

The number of active cases drops to 5,000, while the death toll rises to 145

The Council of Ministers eliminates screenings for access to the canteen and extracurriculars

EL PERIÒDIC
ANDORRA LA VELLA
@PeriodicAND



The Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet, assured yesterday during the press conference following the celebration of the Council of Ministers dedicated exclusively to the health crisis that, for the time being, the fourth dose of the vaccine against covid-19 will not be administered because the population is “more protected” by the generalization of those infected by the omicron variant and the consolidation of the vaccination process. He also said that the ministry has not considered introducing compulsory vaccination, as the percentage of vaccinated is close to 85%. To date, 152,780 vaccines have been administered (57,750 first doses, 56,966 second doses, and 38,064 third doses).

Although a new death has been reported in recent hours (with various pathologies but also with coronavirus), which puts the death toll at 145, the number of active cases has dropped from 5,000 to 4,969, after the results of the TMA tests have been updated due to a failure of one of the machines performing them. In addition, there are only nine people admitted to the Hospital Nostre Senyora de Meritxell, four on the ground floor and five in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), three of whom need mechanical ventilation. The new cases that occurred during the weekend were 1,295, 44% of which are not vaccinated, considering that only 17% of the population has chosen not to receive the vaccine.

«The evolution of the indicators is good, as the data on the omicron variant are stabilizing and the vision is very optimistic, although we must be alert and we cannot lower our arms,» said Benazet. In this sense, the Minister of Health revealed, «in a short time, weeks or days, we will be able to lift some measures and return to normal.» For example, if the number of active cases falls below 3,000, the restrictive measures on catering and nightlife will be lifted.

The Ministry of Health released



GOVERN D'ANDORRA

the figures

44% of positive cases correspond to unvaccinated people.

6% positive in the last school screening, done to more than 1,300 students.

22 admitted to the ICU out of 37 total as of October 31st were not vaccinated.



Joan M. Benazet
MINISTER OF HEALTH

«The omicron variant has good data, a stabilization, so we have a very optimistic view»

► The Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet, during the press conference in the administrative building.

Low viral load, responsible for possible discrepancies between TMA and PCR

►► The Government has acknowledged that there is evidence of a complaint from the public alleging inconsistent results between a TMA test performed by Health and a PCR carried out in a private laboratory on the same day. Following a written response from the Executive to the non-attached General Councilor, Carine Montaner, Joan Martínez Benazet states that although both tests have a specificity of more than 98%, which allows us to state that «few false positives are generated», a patient who undergoes both tests on the same day may have discordant results if he or she enjoys «a very low viral load,» as it



►► Performing a TMA Test.

will not be detectable on PCR, but on TMA. In the event of a discrepancy, «the TMA has a higher specificity than the PCR and should prevail as a decision criterion,» concludes the Minister of Health.

data from the ICU yesterday. As a result, all patients have been infected with the delta variant since October 31st. A total of 37 people had to use this service, 22 of whom were not vaccinated and 15 were. In addition, there were seven deaths, four of them unvaccinated. Outside the ICU, Benazet explained that people who have passed the delta variant have been cited for the third dose, while those who became infected from January 5th will be cited after three months.

CHANGES IN KINDERGARTEN // The improvement of the health situation has led to new measures in the field of education. Initially, the latest school screening of a total of 1,331 students showed that only 6% (80) tested positive for coronavirus, after undergoing an antigen test. With this situation, Health has decided to

eliminate the obligation to carry out school screenings in primary education or equivalent to access extracurricular activities and the canteen service, at the request of the United Parents collective. In any case, the weekly screenings for students and non-immunized staff who want to participate are maintained. In addition, kindergarten classrooms will be confined to three positive people. If there are less than three positives, the whole classroom will be screened. In primary and secondary education, as well as in high school and equivalent, the weekly periodic screening will be done and from the five positives in a classroom a specific protocol will be followed with a screening between the second and third day. There are currently 284 classrooms under supervision, 53 of which are active (total, 17 and partial, 36) and 231 passively.

On the other hand, the Government announced yesterday that it will buy a total of 100,000 antigen tests at a price of 1.85 euros, which it will distribute to pharmacies for the resident and cross-border population, an agreement that is still pending with the College of Pharmacists and which will be announced this Wednesday. The retail price will be lower than in Spain.

Starting this week, the Executive will hold two councils of ministers: one on health only Monday and another on Wednesday with the rest of the issues, while on Friday it will keep the health update. ≡

Don't miss any special editions
of **El Periòdic!**

TRANSPORT

Bus companies are expected to close the compensations in February

Nadal and Coopalsa choose a ticket expert and a lawyer to represent them on the committee

EL PERIÒDIC
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY
@PeriodicAND

The working committee to resolve the disagreement over the compensation for the financial loss resulting from the launch of the monthly transport pass at 30 euros has already started working. Bus companies hope to be able to reconcile positions with the Executive and balance the treasury during the month of February, as this issue has been dragging on since the new fare came into force on September 1st, 2021. "I think that during the course of February, a solution will have to be found on the table", said the general manager of Autocars Nadal, Bartumeu Gabriel, who acknowledged that "sooner we clarify it, the better" because "treasury tensions are accumulating" which is important to resolve. In a similar vein, the manager of Coopalsa, Gabriel Dallerès, stated that "I understand that the resolution should be relatively quick", predicting a temporary nature in the work of the commission "for weeks".

In this way, both representatives made it clear that the first meeting between the three parties had served to present the current context and the different points of view on the issue of compensation, and from there to start an analysis and find a common conclusion and a motion for a resolution that all parties will have to accept. "It simply came to our notice then. Now we are waiting for the progress of the commission to find a way out that can be shared by all", remarked Dallerès, while Gabriel shared that "once everything has been put on the table, each party has to work on its exhibition and then put it together to find the best solution".

It should be noted that the companies have delegated their representation to the working table to two external professionals. According to the general manager of Autocars Nadal, one of them is an expert in transport, in particular, "in everything that has to do with ticketing", that is, with tickets. In ad-



► Archive image of an L1 bus running on Esteve Albert Avenue in Escaldes-Engordany.

The calculations made by the companies and the Executive were very distant, in the order of «the half» of each other

dition, they have also arranged for a lawyer to "keep a close eye on what is going on and get everything right." And Coopalsa has also chosen two professionals in these matters as representatives. "We did not want to be linked directly because, during the day-to-day, the points of view are different. So it's better to have experts in the field," said Gabriel.

For its part, the Government explained in a press release a few days ago that the aim of the working committee was to "set the criteria for the methodology for calculating compensation to alleviate the decline in income for the companies derived from the applicati-

on of the new prices" and defended that the new tariffs responded to the will to "give a new impetus to the promotion of the use of public transport in our country". In fact, this commission was set up after the calculations made by the concessionaire companies of the national transport lines on the one hand and the Executive on the other hand were clearly distant. According to Dallerès last December, the balance proposal for the subscription made by the Government at the time was "below half" of its calculation.

But beyond this current task with the 30-euro season tickets, the companies are hopeful that th-

“

Bartumeu Gabriel

GEN. MANAG. OF NADAL BUSES

«The aim is to lay a clear foundation so that, whatever the government does, the compensation can be calculated quickly and efficiently»

Gabriel Dallerès

COOPALSA MANAGER

«It has been a first meeting to renew contact. The commission must find a way out that can be shared by all»

rough this commission a basis of economic balance can be specified for transport companies for possible new changes in fares while duration of the concession. "The main goal is to lay a clear foundation so that, whatever the government does, the compensation can be calculated quickly and efficiently, without delaying the return of the money to make the balance," he said. Gabriel, who explained that "we imagine that the Executive establishes that from next year, the bus will be free. Who pays for this? Well, the thing would be to establish this procedure, how to replace these cases. In this sense, the manager of Coopalsa reported that "possibly, new problems will appear, but it will be up to the Government to determine how to resolve any discrepancies that may arise".

Your leading real estate agency in Andorra.

Our experience guarantees results, realtors since 1988.



(+376) 353 424 / (+376) 379 769

(+376) 747 747

laportella@andorra.ad

Casa Nova Olivet 10 · Ordino

www.laportella.ad