Germany's COVID vaccination program falling apart

'Massive effect' on Germany's Covid vaccination program, as Berliners skip jab appointments

Berlin, July 6 (RHC)-- The head of the Berlin Red Cross, Mario Czaja, has expressed alarm over a rise in Germans missing COVID vaccination appointments, warning it is having a "massive effect" on the region's ability to protect its population.

The comments, made on Germany's Deutschlandfunk radio station on Monday, come as figures show 5 to 10% of individuals are missing their vaccination appointments at Berlin's inoculation centers. This marks a significant increase from the rate of less than 0.5% at the start of 2021, with second doses particularly affected, as Germans fail to get fully vaccinated.

Speaking to the media, Czaja raised concerns that the increasing number of people failing to attend their appointments was having a "massive effect on Berlin's vaccination coverage," suggesting those who missed their jab should be fined ?25 to ?30 ($29.66 to $35.59).

However, Reinhard Sager, the president of the German District Association, pushed back against imposing fines on no-shows, suggesting officials should "think about what we can do to keep vaccinations up."

A spokesperson for the German government, Steffen Seibert, said on Monday that the country wasn't planning to impose penalties on people who failed to attend their vaccination appointment.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel set a goal of vaccinating around 80% of the country's adult population by mid-July, according to a health ministry spokesperson last month, after the country was no longer constrained by an inability to secure the necessary number of doses.

Currently, only around 39% of German citizens have been fully inoculated, with 56.5% having had at least one dose. The vaccination rate in the country has slowed in recent weeks, with the seven-day daily average of doses administered falling to 701,998 per day last week, 18% lower than the second week of June.

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