

THE WORLD

Around the world, lining up for the shot

Some would-be recipients get a text. Some call for an appointment. And some have the vaccine come to them.

BY BRIAN MURPHY

In Moscow, a vaccine appointment is a phone call away. In Israel, a text message arrives. Across Italy, the idea is to make getting inoculated a part of the landscape with kiosks, decorated with a purple flower, in piazzas from the Alps to the Mediterranean.

The United States, which began coronavirus vaccinations Dec. 14, has tried to speed up the delivery of doses amid the many different rules and priorities of the states. Other parts of the world, with more-centralized health-care systems, are mobilizing their initial waves of vaccinations with often more-coordinated strategies.

The Washington Post checked in with people in six countries on their experiences as they took the first steps to join the growing ranks of the vaccinated.

Tel Aviv: Rina Abadi, tech worker, 32

A week into Israel's vaccine rollout, Rina Abadi got a text: Are you ready for your shot?

The Tel Aviv tech worker is only 32, but Israel's national health system kicked out an automatic appointment because she has a chronic autoimmune disorder.

Israel has vaccinated a higher percentage of its residents than any other country — more than 18 percent — in part because of its highly digitized and streamlined medical network. Abadi was eager to get the vaccine, but had not requested a shot as the program focused on health workers and the elderly.

She clicked on a link, selected a time for the following day and picked a location a five-minute bike ride from her house. The system confirmed the appointment and instantly scheduled a second one for the follow-up shot 21 days later.

At the pop-up vaccine station in a clinic basement on Dec. 29, she swiped her health ID card and was shown straight to a booth. The nurse asked a few health questions and registered the answers on a phone app, then injected Abadi's left arm.

"I didn't even have a chance to get excited — it was so fast," Abadi said.

But she did get emotional. As the nurse filled the syringe, she teared up at the thought of getting on an elevator without fear, arriving home without thoughts of infecting her 9-month-old son.

"I have my complaints about Israel and the government," she said. "But I've never had a complaint about the health-care system."

— Steve Hendrix and Shira Rubin

Toronto: Naheed Dosani, doctor, 35

Naheed Dosani, a palliative care physician and health-care activist in Toronto, received the vaccine call Dec. 30. After months and months of work on the front lines of Canada's coronavirus crisis, he and other health-care workers would end 2020 with a brief moment of hope.

"I started to tear up," he said. The call to Dosani was part of a national vaccine rollout in Canada that prioritizes medical workers in high-risk jobs. Canada has been hit hard by the pandemic, with more than 670,000 cases and 17,000 deaths. The national health-care system, Health Canada, which began vaccinations in mid-December, said that more than 150,000 peo-



FRANCESCO MELANI/RSA VILLA SAN BIAGIO



LOUISE O'SULLIVAN/WINDMILL HEALTHCARE



COURTESY OF RINA ABADI



COURTESY OF ANASTASIA KVASHA



COURTESY OF NAHEED DOSANI



COURTESY OF ROSALIE VOIGTBERGER

TOP LEFT: Basilio Pompei, 103, is vaccinated at his elder-care residence in Dicomano, Italy. "I'm not frightened by covid," he said. "In my life . . . I faced so many things." TOP RIGHT: Sister Margaret Moylan, 78, with her former student Nicola Daly, now director of the care center where Moylan lives in Ferbane, Ireland. BOTTOM: Rina Abadi, Anastasia Kvasha, Naheed Dosani and Rosalie Voigtberger.

ple have been given at least one dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

Dosani works directly with vulnerable patients, including those without housing. He was eligible to register for an early dose at his hospital in Brampton, Ontario. Canada is also vaccinating workers at long-term care facilities and some elderly residents.

On New Year's Eve, he got the vaccination at his workplace, asking a nurse to capture the moment with a snapshot, which he later posted to Instagram.

"Some tears flowed for the immense joy I felt, that we as a society, are finally beginning our journey toward the end of this pandemic," he wrote. "Some tears flowed for the immense grief I felt, for so many who have suffered because of this virus."

"Happy New Year fam!" he continued. "Sending love to you and yours."

— Emily Rauhalala

Oberhausen, Germany: Rosalie Voigtberger, retired postal worker, 73

Rosalie Voigtberger lives above a nursing home for the disabled in Oberhausen in western Germany near the Rhine River. On Jan. 2, a mobile team brought deep-cooled Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to residents there. A few doses were left over. They had to be used before they expired.

"Someone knocked on the door," she said.

Quickly, she fetched her immunization record and went downstairs to a large room that had

been specially prepared for the vaccinations. The wait was brief — three people in front of her. She only had to fill out a form about allergies, and the government footed the bill.

"It was ice-cold, I noticed," she said. Aside from that, it was like a normal immunization. It didn't hurt, and after a day everything was fine. Three weeks later, she was to get the second dose at the same place.

Germany has so far given more than 417,000 vaccinations. As soon as the mobile teams have reached all the nursing homes, state governments in Germany will send letters to independent seniors over 80 inviting them to make appointments at immunization centers via phone hotline.

The centers across Germany are already equipped and ready, built in exhibition halls, sports venues and other large sites.

Hospital workers may get their immunizations at hospitals. Medical offices will give shots when less-cold-dependent vaccines become available in Germany.

— Carrie Donovan

Moscow: Anastasia Kvasha, doctoral student, 29

Anastasia Kvasha decided to get Russia's Sputnik V vaccine a few days before New Year's. She had thought about it since Russia began vaccination programs on Dec. 7.

"I finally made up my mind," she said.

She said the process was "quite

easy." She called the clinic in her neighborhood, "and in a couple of minutes, I had an appointment to get the shot two days later," she said.

On Dec. 30, she waited in a special area set aside for people getting the vaccine. After filling in a brief form, she underwent a short examination by a doctor and received a booklet with information on potential reactions to the vaccine.

She was called into a doctor's office, where she received the vaccine. Then she waited in the hallway while the vaccination certificate was prepared. The whole process took about 40 minutes.

"That was it," she said, "Not much bureaucracy or waiting, quite efficient and straightforward."

The next day, her temperature rose slightly. She also had body aches, weakness and mild pain at the spot of the injection.

"But in a couple of days," she said, "all the symptoms were gone."

Russia's vaccine program has opened wide. On Dec. 26, it expanded to people over 60. In Moscow, people in many pursuits — including education, law enforcement, banking, the public sector, media and construction trades — are eligible.

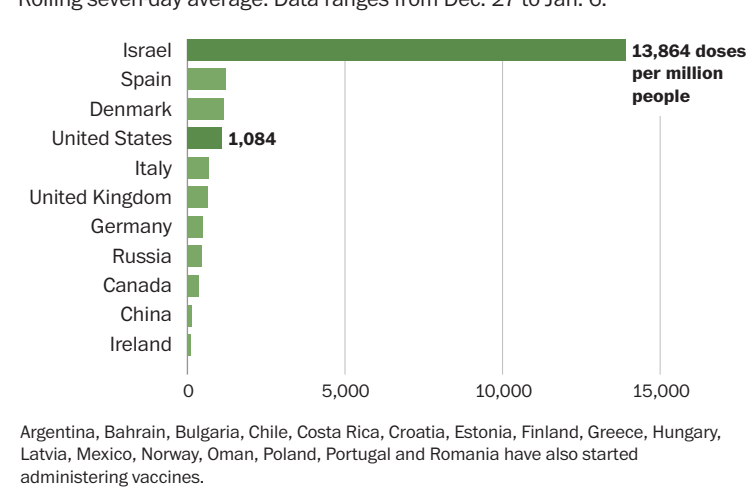
The Russian Direct Investment Fund, which is backing the vaccine, says 1 million Russians have been vaccinated so far.

"There was a constant stream of people arriving to get the shot, most of whom seem to be elderly," Kvasha said.

— Robyn Dixon

Daily coronavirus vaccine doses administered per 1 million people

Rolling seven-day average. Data ranges from Dec. 27 to Jan. 6.



DIGEST

LEBANON 11-day curfew set amid coronavirus case surge

Lebanese authorities tightened a nationwide lockdown Monday, imposing an 11-day, 24-hour curfew, amid a dramatic surge in coronavirus infections.

News of the restrictions, to be implemented starting Thursday morning, sparked panicked grocery-buying as people lined up outside supermarkets to stock up, raising fears that the crowds could further spread the virus.

The government has declared a "state of health emergency" from Jan. 14 to 25 that includes a round-the-clock curfew. The caretaker prime minister said earlier that the country has entered a "very critical zone" in the battle against the coronavirus. Lebanon had announced a

nationwide lockdown last week. But many, including the health minister, considered it too lenient. Hospitals, meanwhile, were running out of beds amid rapidly multiplying cases.

Critics have said that uncoordinated and hesitant policies that wavered between relaxing restrictions and shutting down were behind the failure to contain the virus.

For instance, the government loosened rules ahead of Christmas and New Year's celebrations, hoping to boost a crumbling economy as thousands of Lebanese expats arrived in the country. Bars and nightclubs, which had been ordered shut for months, were allowed to open.

Daily infection rates have since hovered above 3,000, hitting an all-time high of more than 5,000 last week. Since February, Lebanon has recorded more than

219,000 infections and 1,606 deaths.

— Associated Press

OMAN New crown prince post in overhauled charter

Oman's sultan announced a shake-up of the Persian Gulf country's constitution on Monday, with changes that include the appointment of a crown prince for the first time and steps to boost government transparency, the state-run news agency said.

The move, one year after the death of Sultan Qaboos bin Said, who pulled Oman into modernity and deftly navigated the region's sectarian and political divides, comes as the government faces growing pressures at home. The constitutional amendments bring Oman into closer conformity with

other gulf sheikhdoms and dispel fears of any destabilizing succession crisis in the future.

Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said, the former culture minister, came to power last year amid intense speculation after the death of his cousin, who left no heirs. His name was written in a sealed envelope left in the palace in Muscat.

Now, there will be no more mystery or theatrics. Haitham, who over the past year has renamed and reorganized ministries once controlled by his predecessor, changed Oman's basic law to allow for the appointment of a crown prince, the succession practice of every other Arab gulf state.

Monday's announcement did not specify who the crown prince would be or what responsibilities he would have.

The sultan's decree also creates

a committee to monitor and evaluate the performance of senior officials. It is an apparent effort to encourage transparency and accountability as the country struggles to borrow after credit agencies listed its debt as "junk."

— Associated Press

Libyan man sentenced to life in British park stabbings

A Libyan man who fatally stabbed three men in June in an English city park was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole. Three other men were injured in the attack at Forbury Gardens park in Reading. Khairi Saadallah, 26, had pleaded guilty to three counts of murder and three of attempted murder but denied being motivated by an ideological cause or doing significant planning for the attack. Police said the stabbings were terrorism. Prosecutors said

Dicomano, Italy: Basilio Pompei, nursing home resident, 103

Italy's vaccine program came to Basilio Pompei and the 14 other residents at the Villa San Biagio in Dicomano, Italy, about 20 miles northwest of Florence.

The vaccines were organized under a national plan that gives priority to health-care workers and some elder-care facilities. More than 260,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine have been administered since Dec. 27, making Italy's rollout among the fastest in the European Union. Italy plans to build 1,500 vaccine pavilions around the country, decorated with a flower logo meant to symbolize regeneration.

"Grandfather Basilio," as he is known, wore a mask as he received the shot. The facility had not recorded any cases of the coronavirus, but Italian vaccine efforts seek to close out the first phase of the shots in all elder-care centers by the spring.

Pompei, a former butcher in Pontassieve near Florence, was captured by Germany in the days following Italy's surrender to Allied forces in early September 1943. He spent two years in a camp in occupied Poland.

Pompei still thinks often of the brutality and bombardments of the war. This is just a new kind of fight for him. "I'm not frightened by covid," he said. "In my life, I traveled all over Europe, and I faced so many things."

After Pompei's vaccination was reported on Italian news sites, some commentators on social media assailed health officials for the "useless" vaccination of someone more than a century old — reflecting the divides in the country of anti-vaccine groups and others.

"He has been the object of shameful and intolerable attacks," said Giampaolo Giannelli, a Tuscan regional official with the Forza Italia party. "A real shame."

— Laura Silvia Battaglia

Ferbane, Ireland: Sister Margaret Moylan, retired teacher, 78

On Thursday, Ireland expanded its vaccine program to people 65 and older at long-term care facilities. Sister Margaret Moylan was among the first to get the jab when a mobile team arrived at the Ferbane Care Centre in Ferbane, about midway between Dublin and Galway.

The vaccinations began at 9 a.m. Moylan received her shot about 90 minutes later.

"It brings great hope," she said. "Everyone here is getting it."

The director of the Ferbane facility, Nicola Daly, was once one of Moylan's students in secondary school, where Moylan taught French and religion. Daly said she was thrilled they received the vaccine together.

Daly said she was told on Dec. 31 about the timing of the vaccinations for the center's 48 residents and 68 staff members. The preparatory work included briefings with residents, their doctors and their families.

Ireland's state-run health system seeks to have 35,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine administered by this week at vaccination centers and medical offices. It plans to have pharmacies in the mix soon. It hopes to boost the vaccination rate once shipments of the Moderna vaccine arrive.

— Yvonne Gordon

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