

WHO says nations should not lose gains by hastily dropping COVID-19 measures



Geneva, July 7 (RHC)-- Countries easing their COVID-19 restrictions have been warned by the World Health Organization (WHO) to exercise “extreme caution” in order to preserve the “gains” made by imposing lockdowns and other public health measures.

WHO emergencies chief Mike Ryan told a regular news conference on Wednesday that as countries reopen their economies, the transmission of the virus will increase, including in Europe, which has registered a 33% jump in cases in the past week. “We would ask governments to be really careful at this moment not to lose the gains you have made,” he said.

Ryan said he hoped Europe would not be hit by further waves of infection as countries lift their restrictions but said avoiding “overwhelmed hospitals” is “not a given.”

The warning comes as UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Monday that most of England’s remaining obligatory health measures, such as social distancing and requirement to use face masks, would be lifted from July 19. In late June, Iceland also lifted its remaining Covid-19 measures.

Iceland, Germany and the UK have all made progress with their vaccination campaigns in recent months, but on Wednesday Ryan warned against overestimating the protection offered to populations that aren’t fully vaccinated.

The WHO Europe leader warns of new wave as COVID cases creep up after 10-week decline across continent He urged individuals, especially vulnerable people and those who haven’t received their jabs yet, to take responsibility and keep an eye on the risk of virus transmission in their community.

“The idea that everyone is protected and it’s 'kum-ba-yah' and everything goes back to normal, I think right now is a very dangerous assumption anywhere in the world, and it’s still a dangerous assumption in the European environment,” he added.

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