Indonesia's president to receive country's first COVID-19 vaccine shot

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Indonesia President Joko Widodo said the government would provide free vaccinations for the entire population

Indonesian President Joko Widodo said Wednesday he would be the first person in the country to be vaccinated for COVID-19 as he unveiled a campaign promising free inoculations for everyone in world's fourth most-populous nation.

Widodo's announcement comes as Indonesia battles misinformation over the virus in order to stave off a fresh wave of infections, with some 630,000 recorded by Wednesday and more than 19,000 deaths.

"The COVID-19 vaccine for all citizens will be FREE," Widodo said in a video on his Twitter account.

The government originally said only health workers, the elderly and other key personnel would be given the vaccine for free.

Widodo did not say when he would take the vaccine, or when the national inoculation program would start.

But said he was happy to be the first to be inoculated in order to prove it was safe.

"There's no reason people shouldn't get the vaccine or doubt its safety," he added.

Indonesia has signed deals for more than 350 million vaccine doses from various international pharmaceutical companies—including British-Swedish firm AstraZeneca and Chinese suppliers Sinovac.

The current vaccine deals do not, however, provide enough doses for the required two per person that would cover Indonesia's entire 270-million population.

The country received its first delivery of 1.2 million Sinovac doses this month, with another 1.8 million to arrive in January.

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