

Chile rolls out mobility pass for the vaccinated

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People in Chile who have been vaccinated and are fully immunized against the coronavirus could from Wednesday obtain a pass to move about more freely, a move criticized by health professionals.

The pass, which can be downloaded on a person's [mobile phone](#) two weeks after receiving their second shot, gives the bearer permission to move about freely in cities under lockdown to go to the supermarket, pharmacy, or for open air exercise.

Those without permits, by comparison, have to print out a permission form every time they want to leave the house, which is allowed for essential reasons only.

Pass holders can also travel between cities and towns not under lockdown.

Face masks remain compulsory for everyone, indoors and out, and the pass will not be valid during the daily 10.00 pm-to-5.00 am curfew. It also does not replace the permission people need to go back to work, the government has said.

The measure came into force as Chile passed the 50-percent mark of fully vaccinated adults—over 7.7 million to date out a 15.2 million target population.

The country has three vaccines in its arsenal, with over 17 million doses of CoronaVac administered to date, 3.36 million of Pfizer-BioNTech, and nearly 500,000 of Oxford-AstraZeneca.

China's CoronaVac has the lowest proven efficacy of the three, with a Chile study showing in April it was 67 percent effective at preventing symptomatic Covid-19 and 80 percent effective at preventing death.

The country's Medical College and nine medical associations are not in favor of the vaccine pass given the persistently high infection rate.

"Any increase in mobility will augment infections. This new permit can lead to confusion and a false sense of security," they said in a joint statement.

Health Minister Enrique Paris defended the measure as a "reward" for those who got vaccinated.

Some 1.3 million people in Chile have been infected with the coronavirus, and over 28,600 have died. The country has one of the highest vaccine rates in the region and the world.

Neighbor Argentina, meanwhile, received over a million doses of AstraZeneca and Sputnik V vaccines Wednesday as it battles its worst phase of the pandemic to date.

The country of 45 million, due to host the Copa America in three weeks' time, has so far given one [vaccine](#) dose to 8.9 million people and two doses to 2.5 million.

It has one of the highest infection rates in the region, and on Wednesday registered more than 35,300 cases and 532 deaths in 24 hours, bringing the toll to over 75,500.

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