

## **UPDATE June 8:**

Number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Lithuania: 1720\*

Deaths: 71

Recovered: 1331

Number of tests performed yesterday: 2253

A total of samples tested in relation to the suspected coronavirus to date: 335 686

\*The number of confirmed infection cases. Until 28 April, information has been provided on positive laboratory test results rather than on positive cases (people).

The Lithuanian government's emergency commission proposes that the Cabinet lift the coronavirus lockdown from June 16, but leave in place an emergency situation regime introduced in late February. The nationwide lockdown was introduced on March 16 in an effort to stem the spread of the COVID-19 infection. The state-level emergency situation was declared on February 26.

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While assessing challenges to the health system in overcoming the COVID-19 crisis in OECD countries, Frederico Guanais, Deputy Head of the Health Division at the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), praises Lithuania's first steps in managing the coronavirus outbreak. The expert notes the success of the infection management strategy. The topic was discussed last Wednesday at a videoconference "COVID-19 Management Strategy in Lithuania" initiated by the Office of the Government.

According to Guanais, Lithuania had a good chance to respond adequately to the pandemic outbreak due to the country's health professionals and adequate infrastructure: compared to the average of other OECD countries, Lithuania has more doctors and slightly fewer nurses, and Lithuania is fourth among OECD countries in the number of intensive care beds available per 1000 population. At the conference, the OECD representative repeatedly stressed the need to stay alert in getting ready for a possible second wave of the coronavirus.

During the event, Minister of Health Aurelijus Veryga shared insights into why Lithuania had managed to control the first wave of the pandemic. The Minister emphasized Lithuania's prompt

response to the threat of the pandemic, the rapid reorganization of the national and regional health care institutions, a successful testing strategy, even with limited human resources, and responsible public behaviour under the quarantine conditions.

The Minister also noted the numerous voluntary initiatives and the responsible work of the media, the constructive decision-making process, and the allocation of necessary funding to address the coronavirus challenge. Minister Veryga emphasized that Lithuania had successfully used the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. The Minister assured the OECD representatives that Lithuania was ready to share good practices with other countries and intended to strengthen cooperation in preparation for a possible second wave of coronavirus.

At the conference, Vice-Minister of Health Kristina Garuolienė delivered a presentation on the current epidemiological situation in Lithuania. Orijana Mašalė, a member of the State-level Emergency Operations Group, presented an overview of the COVID-19 management strategy and the approach to easing of the quarantine conditions. Aistis Šimaitis, Chief Analyst of COVID-19, assessed the dynamics of the spread of coronavirus infection. Marius Čiurlionis, Adviser to the Minister of Health, and Associate Professor Valdas Pečeliūnas, Doctor at Vilnius University Hospital, shared their insights on the management of coronavirus infection.

The OECD event was aimed at professionals working in the epidemiology, medicine, science, and health sectors, and everyone interested in tackling the challenge of coronavirus infection was invited to join. Representatives of 34 countries around the world showed interest in the conference. The event was prompted by the recent increase in other countries' interest in Lithuania's good practices in successfully managing the pandemic outbreak in Lithuania.