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Coronavirus-Infected Moscow Election Official Administered Vote on Putin Reforms – Reports

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Health officials warned that the nationwide vote could contribute to a renewed coronavirus outbreak.
Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

A Moscow election official infected with the coronavirus administered votes during Russia's weeklong plebiscite on constitutional changes, the Dozhd television channel reported Thursday.

The nationwide vote was postponed from its original date of April 22 and was spread out over a week due to the coronavirus pandemic. Health officials had warned that it might still be too soon to hold the vote, citing the risk of ushering in a second wave of the virus.

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Election workers at a polling station in Moscow's Severnoye Tushino district were tested for the virus on June 27-28, days after voting had already begun on June 25.

The polling station's chair Olga Vorokhobko received her positive test results in the afternoon on Wednesday, the last day of voting, Dozhd reported, citing another election official in the Severnoye Tushino district.

Vorokhobko went home to self-isolate upon receiving the results but the polling station remained open to voters until the polls closed, Dozhd reported.

According to official numbers, 1,310 people voted at this polling station in-person, with more than 300 voting on July 1 alone.

About 78% of Russian voters voted in favor of the package of amendments with a 68% turnout, a result the Kremlin hailed as a "triumph" and critics derided as illegitimate. In addition to adding populist and conservative tenets to the Constitution, the changes also allow Putin to seek re-election twice after 2024 by resetting his term limits.

Russia has confirmed a total of 667,883 coronavirus cases nationwide as of Friday, with most new cases appearing outside Moscow in recent weeks.

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