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Russian Hospitals Near Capacity With Coronavirus Patients

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Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said Wednesday that Russia currently has 176,000 hospital beds for coronavirus patients. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

Russian hospitals are near capacity with coronavirus patients as new infections break records and authorities attempt to slow the second wave of the virus, a top health official said Tuesday.

"To date, hospital bed occupancy is almost 90%," Deputy Health Minister Oleg Gridnev was quoted as saying at a conference by Interfax.

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Gridnev said one-fifth of those hospitalized have a mild case of Covid-19.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said Wednesday that Russia currently has 176,000 hospital

beds for coronavirus patients, with 9,000 reserve beds. He said two-thirds of those infected receive outpatient care.

Russia has seen its daily caseload nearly triple in the past month and set a new record Tuesday for both deaths (244) and infections (13,868), according to official statistics. Overall, Russia has confirmed almost 23,000 deaths and more than 1.3 million cases, the fourth-highest caseload in the world.

The latest surge in Covid-19 infections has prompted a number of hospitals across the country to stop admitting patients with other illnesses.

Around half of Russia's regions have reinstated various restrictions in an attempt to slow the spread of the infection.

Moscow, the epicenter of Russia's Covid-19 outbreak with almost 340,000 total infections, has ordered businesses to switch 30% of their employees to remote work and extended the fall school break.

Mayor Sergei Sobyanin has urged residents to continue to take precautions before the rollout of a coronavirus vaccine. He said this week would prove crucial in determining whether the city's current "light" restrictions would effectively limit a rise in new Covid-19 cases.

Sobyanin claimed Wednesday that the restrictions proved effective, with new infections among children going down from 19% to 11% in recent days. Next week, he said first-to-fifth graders will be able to return to school while the rest will continue distance learning for at least two more weeks.

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