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Western Coronavirus Vaccines May Be Coming to Russia – Kommersant

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Russia has itself developed at least five Covid-19 vaccines. **Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency**

Russian residents may soon be able to receive vaccines not recognized by the government, the Kommersant business daily reported, citing a Health Ministry proposal put up for public discussion.

The move to relax import rules could potentially allow Russians to have Western coronavirus jabs like Pfizer and Moderna, as well as Chinese vaccines like Sinopharm and Sinovac.

The Health Ministry proposed Tuesday to grant the Moscow International Medical Cluster (MIMC) project the right to import vaccines and drugs not registered in Russia. MIMC operates in Moscow City Hall's Skolkovo Innovation Center, which works under a special legal regime that gives it preferential access to drugs registered in OECD member-states, even if they are not registered in Russia.

"Participating clinics will be able to distribute foreign coronavirus vaccines in Russia in the future," according to Kommersant.

“Demand for them may be significant, especially in the case of further difficulties with the Sputnik V vaccine being recognized abroad,” the paper added, noting that the demand could be high for relatively small supplies.

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The paper did not provide a timeframe for when the Health Ministry’s legislative proposal to relax import rules could gain approval.

Public debates over the proposal are expected to end on Oct. 25, according to the government’s website that publishes legislative proposals.

Russian authorities have thwarted previous attempts to import Covid-19 vaccines into the country, led by the MIMC branch of Israel’s Hadassah Medical Center until January 2021.

Russia has itself developed at least five Covid-19 vaccines, although its national vaccination drive has stalled at 36% of the adult population, according to the independent Gogov monitor, as infections surged since the summer and deaths hit pandemic highs.

The opportunity to be vaccinated with foreign jabs would be critical for Russians traveling to the United States, which The Washington Post reported this week is set to ban entry to non-citizens who have not been vaccinated with an FDA or WHO-approved vaccine.

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