



## France sees rise in COVID cases; Vaccine rollout a 'disaster,' says doctor

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France is entering a third wave of COVID restrictions as they see a spike in cases, especially amongst those under 65 years old.

Dr. Jeffrey Singer of the CATO Institute says the increase in hospitalization among the younger population is due to France's vaccination efforts.

"France has been pretty much a disaster when it comes to rolling out the vaccine. Something like only 12% of their population has even gotten the jab, and almost all of that has been concentrated on senior people in fact the majority are over the age of 70," said Dr. Singer to The National Desk's Jan Jeffcoat. "As the senior people are getting vaccinated and they're not getting sick and going to the hospital, proportionally, a larger number of the people who are in the hospital are younger people."

Dr. Singer says another factor is younger people wait longer before going to the hospital.

"They think they can tough it out so when they finally get sick enough to go to the hospital, they tend to occupy the hospital beds a little longer there," said Dr. Singer. "

Pfizer and Moderna say the vaccine is likely to last at least six months, an increase from the previously believed 90 days.

"The vaccine manufacturers continuously run real-life tests on their vaccines," said Dr. Singer. "So far it looks encouraging, there might be maybe even a couple of years before we get even another booster. But we really don't know yet, and we'll continue to learn as we go along."

Vaccine passports are being tested currently in New York and Las Vegas, through phone apps that show proof that you've been vaccinated. Dr. Singer says paper certifications of passport records are something we've been doing for decades - but when it comes to digital data

"It's not secure. Every time you use a QR code anywhere, it's subject to hacking, including within a government database," said Dr. Singer. "It's also not particularly equitable, because there are some lower-income people who don't have smartphones."

Drug deaths in the past year spiked to about 27% - and Dr. Singer says they will "continue to increase as long as we continue to maintain our current policy."

Dr. Singer says prohibition "stimulates the development of more potent forms of drugs."

“When you tailgate outside the football game you drink beer. When you sneak your alcohol into the stadium you'd sneak in whiskey. So as long as you maintain this drug prohibition, this is going to continue,” said Dr. Singer. “I think we should put efforts into things like harm reduction I think we should allow for the expansion of needle exchange programs, safe consumption routes, anonymous testing of your drugs to make sure they're not laced with fentanyl.”

In order to decrease the rate of drug deaths, Dr. Singer says we should decriminalize all drugs, like Portugal did in 2001.

“They found that the death rate went down to the lowest overdose death rate in all of Europe,” said Dr. Singer.