

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

22nd Aug 2022

Lockdown Exit

Australia is at the back of the bus on living with COVID-19

I just got back to Australia after a month in a country where you would not know COVID existed. I saw about three people wearing masks. Public transport and bars were packed. Life was normal, and I don't mean the perverted "new normal". People are living with COVID and they are not afraid anymore. Everyone who found out I was from Australia asked me if life was still really bad here. One government official even asked "how does it feel to be out of that prison and a free man again?". So much for being the "envy of the world". On the trip back, I sat in a maskless crowded bus for four hours, then I sat in a maskless packed departure lounge and walked shoulder to shoulder with a maskless horde of people to the plane, when I had to put on a mask, until I ordered my first drink. I kept a drink in front of me for the duration because apparently it is the best protection against COVID.

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7866887/australia-is-at-the-back-of-the-bus-on-living-with-covid-19/>

'Covid is over' idea may threaten booster uptake in England, scientists warn

The prevailing idea that "Covid is over" may jeopardise England's autumn booster programme, scientists have said, warning mixed messages about the threat of the disease could reduce the uptake of jabs. The booster campaign is set to begin on 5 September, with the new dual-variant Covid vaccine from Moderna among those to be administered. However, with England ditching other Covid measures such as mass testing, and using terms such as "post-pandemic recovery", experts have raised concerns that many of those eligible may not come forward for their vaccination. "I think it's very likely we will see a lower uptake for the autumn Covid-19 vaccine boosters than for the first two vaccinations," said Azeem Majeed, a GP in west London and professor of primary care and public health at Imperial College London.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/21/covid-is-over-attitude-may-threaten-autumn-booster-uptake-england-scientists>

China Adds Almost 2200 New Covid Cases, Tourist Spots Worst Hit

China reported 2,181 new Covid-19 cases, as conditions worsen in the country's biggest outbreak since the lockdown of Shanghai earlier this year. About 553 people were confirmed to be infected and there were another 1,628 asymptomatic cases as of Saturday, according to a statement released by the National Health Commission. In a separate statement, the NHC said the country has administered 3.43 billion doses of Covid vaccines as of Aug. 20. Infections have surged to a three-month high, with tourist destinations worst hit among the current round of flareups.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-21/china-adds-almost-2-200-new-covid-cases-tourist-spots-worst-hit>

Repeat waves prompt 'long COVID' fears

COVID-19 infections and deaths continue to rise as a leading infectious diseases expert warns Australia is losing its battle with the virus. Burnet Institute director Brendan Crabb says current strategies to combat the country's caseload are not working. "What the numbers say is that we're simply not winning," Professor Crabb told Seven's Sunrise. "The latest wave we just had ... was the worst wave we've had this year. More hospitalisations and more deaths." Australia reported another 10,500 cases and 36 fatalities on Sunday, with the nation on track to record its 10 millionth case

within a week.

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7869019/repeat-waves-prompt-long-covid-fears/>

Tibet autonomous region's COVID-19 situation shows increase

The Tibet autonomous region reported 32 locally confirmed COVID-19 cases and 946 asymptomatic carriers between Thursday and 2 pm Friday, health authorities said at a news briefing in Lhasa on Friday. As of Thursday, the region had 375 areas designated as high-risk for COVID-19 and 208 for medium-risk. A total of 11 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals after recovery on Thursday, 15 asymptomatic infectors and 196 close contacts were dismissed from medical observation, but 33,760 close and secondary contacts have been traced are still under centralized isolation for further medical observation.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202208/19/WS62ff7f23a310fd2b29e7345b.html>

Long Covid: Girl, 10, struggles to walk and talk

A 10-year-old girl with long Covid struggles to walk and can barely speak, six months after catching the virus. Libby caught Covid in February and is still struggling with extreme fatigue, constant headaches, and is using a wheelchair due to feeling too weak. The Office for National Statistics predicted only 0.6% of people aged two to 11 in the UK had long Covid. However, Kate Davies from charity Long Covid Kids said it could be higher as "many children go under the radar"

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-62041613>

Covid-19: Free lateral flow testing to end in NI from Monday

Free lateral flow testing for people with Covid symptoms will end in Northern Ireland from Monday. The scheme ended in GB in May, but Stormont's Department of Health retained the measure. It has now said testing will be more proportionate and "targeted to protect the most vulnerable",

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-62607759?at_campaign=64&at_custom2=twitter&at_medium=custom7&at_custom4=4E2F66D0-1FBF-11ED-BD6D-A2800EDC252D&at_custom1=link&at_custom3=BBC+News+NI

Covid-19 to be declared endemic in October

The government will declare Covid-19 endemic in October, and the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) will then no longer be the main agency dealing with the disease. CCSA spokesman Taweasilp Visanuyothin said on Friday that from October the disease would be under the emergency operations centre of the Public Health Ministry and provincial communicable disease committees, instead of the CCSA chaired by the prime minister. He gave no specific date. From November, the provincial committees would be the sole agencies dealing with it.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2372410/covid-19-to-be-declared-endemic-in-october>

Covid-19 testing Northern Ireland: Changes as those with symptoms no longer advised to test

Changes to Covid-19 testing for those with symptoms in Northern Ireland are set to come into force on Monday. It has been announced that most people in the general population with symptoms of coronavirus will no longer be advised to take a lateral flow test from August 22. Free lateral flow tests will no longer be available for this purpose, a move in line with the Test, Trace and Protect Transition plan published in March 2022. It aims to make testing more proportionate and targeted to protect the most vulnerable.

<https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/covid-19-testing-northern-ireland-24801371>

How African countries coordinated the response to COVID-19: lessons for public health

Multiple reasons for the slower spread have been put forward. One was that the continent's population is relatively young and younger people were at lower risk of severe illness in the event of SARS-CoV-2 infection. The possible contribution of pre-existing immunity from other viral infections was also put forward. And it was suggested that the slower spread might not be the real picture:

there could be underestimation of the true magnitude of the pandemic, resulting from weak surveillance systems. There is another aspect to consider, though. It is possible that what countries did to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2 infections actually worked to some extent. Diverse sectors and disciplines collaborated towards the shared goal of mitigating the pandemic effects.

<https://theconversation.com/how-african-countries-coordinated-the-response-to-covid-19-lessons-for-public-health-187299>

Exit Strategies

U.S. first lady Jill Biden tests negative for COVID

U.S. first lady Jill Biden tested negative for COVID-19 after isolating for five days following a positive test, the White House said on Sunday. "After isolating for five days and receiving negative results from two consecutive COVID-19 tests, the First Lady will depart South Carolina later today for Delaware," her spokesperson said in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-first-lady-jill-biden-tests-negative-covid-2022-08-21/>

Jamie Oliver Reveals 'Deeply Scary' Long Covid Battle of Wife Jools

Jamie Oliver has praised his wife Jools calling her "an absolute superstar" after suffering from long Covid for two years. The celebrity chef, 47, who rose to fame on cookery show The Naked Chef, said his childrenswear designer wife had been "really affected" by the virus. He told the Daily Mail Weekend magazine: "She's had bad Covid and long Covid so she's been really affected by it, sadly.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-20/jamie-oliver-reveals-deeply-scary-long-covid-battle-of-wife-jools>

Thailand to Allow Foreign Tourists to Extend Stay as Covid Eases

Thailand will permit an extended length of stay for foreign tourists between October and March in a bid to support its economic recovery as pressures from Covid-19 ease. Foreigners from 18 territories coming to Thailand under the visa on arrival category will be allowed to double their length of stay for up to 30 days, Taweetilp Visanuyothin, a spokesman for Thailand's main Covid task force said on Friday. Those from more than 50 places that currently get 30 days will be able to stay for up to 45 days.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-19/thailand-to-allow-foreign-tourists-to-extend-stay-as-covid-eases>

Spread of latest outbreak of COVID-19 contained in Hainan

The spread of the latest outbreak of COVID-19 in South China's Hainan province has been contained and the situation is taking a positive turn thanks to substantial progress in epidemic prevention and control, said local authorities. Signs of improvement have been seen in Sanya, at the southern tip of Hainan island and the epicenter of the latest outbreak, Li Wenxiu, deputy director with the Hainan Provincial Health Commission, told a news conference held in Haikou on Friday.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202208/19/WS62ff7fe9a310fd2b29e7345f.html>

Experts: COVID Lockdowns Likely to Exacerbate Chinese Repression in Xinjiang, Tibet

Fresh outbreaks of COVID-19 in Xinjiang and Tibet this month have turned China's two western frontier regions into lockdown zones. According to Chinese media, authorities divided the COVID-affected areas of the autonomous regions into high-, medium- and low-risk zones. Xinjiang reported its first COVID-19 outbreak July 31. One week later, on Aug. 6, Tibet announced some people had been infected. As of Thursday in Xinjiang, there were 329 high-risk, 138 medium-risk and 24 low-risk areas. On the same day, Chinese authorities in Tibet announced that there were 346 high-risk and 223 medium-risk areas.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/experts-covid-lockdowns-likely-to-exacerbate-chinese-repression-in-xinjiang-tibet-6709495.html>

U.S. Won't Pay For Covid-19 Shots Soon. Here's How It Could Work

The Department of Health and Human Services will hold a meeting later this month to pave the way for insurers and patients to pay for Covid-19 vaccines, antiviral treatments and tests, according to the Wall Street Journal. Stakeholders from across the healthcare industry will take part in the planning meeting, during which representatives from pharmacy chains, state health departments and drug producers are expected to begin laying out how insurance coverage and reimbursement would work with the shift, along with industry regulations.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/carlieporterfield/2022/08/18/us-wont-pay-for-covid-19-shots-soon-heres-how-it-could-work/>

WHO recommends second COVID-19 booster for highest-risk groups

The World Health Organization's immunization advisory group Thursday recommended a second COVID-19 vaccine booster for older people, health care workers, and people at high risk of developing severe disease. The advice mirrors that given by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA), which have called for second boosters to be given to people aged 60 and over, as well as those with medical conditions. The WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) is recommending the extra jab in older people; health care workers; pregnant people; those with conditions that cause them to be immune-compromised and both people with comorbidities that put them at higher risk for severe disease.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/who-recommends-second-covid-19-booster-for-highest-risk-groups/>

Covid-19 booster jabs to be rolled out in England from early September

Nurses will be offered a flu vaccination alongside a Covid-19 booster jab this autumn where possible, NHS England has said as it outlined details of the latest stage of the coronavirus vaccination programme. The autumn Covid-19 vaccination booster programme is to start in the week beginning 5 September, with care home residents and housebound people being given the jab by NHS staff. The National Booking Service will also open that week, allowing people aged over 75 and the most clinically vulnerable, to book a vaccination from 12 September. Individuals will be offered the new bivalent Moderna vaccine, which targets the original Covid-19 virus strain and the omicron variant, "where appropriate and subject to sufficient supply"

<https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/coronavirus/covid-19-booster-jabs-to-be-rolled-out-in-england-from-early-september-19-08-2022/>

North Korea's Kim praises military medics for frontline COVID fight in capital

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held a ceremony to thank and praise military medics for spearheading the country's fight against the coronavirus in the capital Pyongyang, state media said on Friday. Thousands of medics of the Korean People's Army, who had been dispatched to the "emergency anti-epidemic front", were discharged after Kim declared victory over COVID-19 and eased restrictions last week

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkoreas-kim-praises-military-medics-frontline-covid-fight-capital-2022-08-19/>

Partisan Exits

More than 20 Chinese universities postpone new semester to stop COVID-19

More than 20 colleges and universities across China have moved to postpone the starting dates of the new semester, in a move that public health experts say is necessary to stop the spread of the COVID-19, as many places across the country are combating sporadic outbreaks. Due to the serious and complex epidemic situation across the nation, some universities and colleges in municipalities and provinces, including Beijing, Northwest China's Shaanxi, East China's Fujian, South China's Hainan, Northeast China's Liaoning and Jilin provinces, have decided to put off the start of the new

semester.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202208/1273504.shtml>

Singapore to end most rules on masks indoors as Covid-19 wave eases

Singapore will scrap rules for wearing masks in most indoor settings as the country moves further toward casting off all its pandemic-era curbs. Masks will only be required on public transport and healthcare facilities like hospitals and nursing homes after the easing, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said in his annual National Day Rally speech on Sunday. Details will be released later, he said. The masking requirement is one of the last few virus curbs in the Southeast Asian city-state after authorities lifted most rules including limits on gatherings, and testing for incoming vaccinated travelers. Outdoor masks were made optional earlier this year as part of a pivot toward a strategy of living with Covid-19.

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/singapore-end-most-rules-masks-indoors-covid19-wave-eases>

Japan PM Kishida infected with COVID, recuperating - govt

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has tested positive for COVID-19, forcing him to cancel a planned trip to Tunisia to attend a key conference on African development, a person close to him said on Sunday. Kishida, who has just returned from a week-long vacation, will work from his residence from Monday and will join the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) online, the source said, asking not to be identified because he is not authorised to talk to the media.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-pm-kishida-infected-with-covid-19-nhk-2022-08-21/>

National Day Rally 2022: PM Lee to speak about Covid-19, how Singapore can secure its future

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will speak about Singapore's experience during the Covid-19 pandemic and set out how the country can secure its future at the National Day Rally on Sunday (Aug 21). He said this in a brief trailer posted on Facebook on Friday, which showed the preparations for his speech at ITE College Central in Ang Mo Kio. "When I first spoke (at ITE College Central) in 2013, I said the venue underscored my commitment to investing in everyone in this country, and emphasised that Singapore was at a turning point. Today, this is truer than ever," he said. PM Lee noted that this is the first year since the onset of Covid-19 when he could do the rally at full-scale. He had delivered his rally speech in a Mediacorp studio in 2021, while the event was called off in 2020.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/national-day-rally-to-cover-spores-covid-19-experience-how-it-can-secure-its-future-pm-lee>

Police call for Bolsonaro to be charged for spreading Covid misinformation

Brazilian federal police have called for President Jair Bolsonaro to be charged with spreading fake information about a coronavirus outbreak that has killed more than 680,000 of his citizens, including bogus claims of a link between Aids and Covid vaccines. Bolsonaro's anti-scientific response to a disease he called "a bit of a cold" has been internationally condemned and the subject of a congressional inquiry in which the far-right populist was accused of deliberately delaying vaccine purchases and promoting quack "cures" such as hydroxychloroquine.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/18/jair-bolsonaro-covid-misinformation-charge-brazil-police>

Scientific Viewpoint

Chinese city swabs freshly caught seafood for Covid-19

The Chinese coastal city of Xiamen is testing freshly caught fish, crabs and even shrimp for Covid-19 as it goes all out to contain a spiraling outbreak -- a policy drawing ridicule online and criticism from experts who say it's a "waste of resources." This week, videos of hazmat-suited health workers

sticking cotton swabs into the mouths of fish and crabs went viral on Chinese social media, sparking complaints that the country's zero-Covid policy had gone too far. Since the pandemic, China has relied on mass testing, extensive quarantines and snap lockdowns to stamp out any resurgence of the coronavirus.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/19/china/xiamen-china-fish-covid-testing-intl-hnk/index.html>

Is Thailand's booster program losing race against fast-mutating COVID?

Thanks to constant mutations, the COVID-19 virus is still several steps ahead of vaccine developers. While researchers have managed to develop vaccines that are effective against the original strain of the new coronavirus and major variants like Delta, global mass vaccination efforts have failed to halt the raging pandemic. This is because the virus continues to evolve, spawning new mutations that evade the defences of currently available vaccines. As a result, the global infection rate remains at nearly one million confirmed COVID-19 cases per day, with thousands of deaths. Since the pandemic began, COVID-19 has claimed some 6.45 million lives across the world.

<https://www.thaipbsworld.com/is-thailands-booster-program-losing-race-against-fast-mutating-covid/>

Serious adverse events rare after COVID-19 boosters in young kids

Data collected from two vaccine safety surveillance programs in the first 10 weeks of administration of third doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 to US children aged 5 to 11 years show that serious adverse events were rare. A related study in South Korea shows waning vaccine effectiveness (VE) in adolescents after two and three Pfizer doses but sufficient protection against critical illness. Most side effects mild. In the first study, published today in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) analyzed adverse-event data from the agency's voluntary smart phone-based v-safe vaccine-monitoring program and the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) from May 17 to Jul 31, 2022. VAERS is a passive vaccine surveillance system managed by the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/08/serious-adverse-events-rare-after-covid-19-boosters-young-kids>

CureVac announces start of phase 1 trial of modified COVID-19 mRNA vaccine candidate

German-based mRNA company CureVac has announced the start of a phase 1 study of its modified COVID-19 mRNA vaccine candidate - CV0501 - administered as a booster dose to previous vaccination. Developed in collaboration with GSK, CV0501 is based on CureVac's 'second-generation mRNA backbone' specifically designed to protect against the Omicron variant. Set to be conducted at clinical sites in the UK, the US, Australia and the Philippines, the dose-escalation study will enrol up to 180 healthy, COVID-19-vaccinated adults to evaluate the safety, reactogenicity and immunogenicity of a single booster dose of CV0501 in the dose range of 12µg to 50µg.

https://www.pmlive.com/pharma_news/curevac_announces_start_of_phase_1_trial_of_modified_covid-19_mrna_vaccine_candidate_1453563

Covid-19: Results from India's 12 molnupiravir clinical trials remain unpublished

The results of 12 clinical trials conducted in India looking at the efficacy of molnupiravir —an antiviral drug for covid-19—have not been published a year after completion, researchers have said. Researchers from St George's, Imperial College London, and the University of Liverpool looked at the availability of data from these trials as of July 2022 for a study released as a preprint.¹ They found that, while some details of the findings had been revealed through press releases or conference abstracts, none of the results had been published in a journal or preprint service. This equates to missing data for 13 694 trial participants. "Patient level data would help answer many of the unanswered questions around the molnupiravir trials; however, even summary data are largely absent," the authors wrote. In particular, questions remain over the efficacy of the drug. In October 2021, the MOVE-OUT trial first reported that it halved the risk of hospital admission or death by 50%,

but when the full results were published in December 2021 they showed that hospital admissions and deaths were only around 30% lower in the molnupiravir group.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o2063>

WHO recommends Valneva's COVID vaccine

The World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday recommended the use of French drugmaker Valneva's COVID-19 vaccine. The UN agency also recommended the use of a second booster dose for some individuals at high risk of severe disease. However, that does not constitute a general recommendation of vaccinating all adults, and is aimed at avoiding severe disease and death in populations at the highest risk, it said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-recommends-valnevas-covid-vaccine-2022-08-18/>

Canada OKs Pfizer COVID booster for kids 5-11, sees monkeypox cases slow

Canada's health ministry on Friday said it had authorized the use of Pfizer Inc's and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine as a booster for children five to 11 years old at least six months after receiving their initial two doses. The authorization for a booster shot was granted after a thorough, independent review of the vaccine, which "provides good protection against severe illness, hospitalization and death," the health ministry wrote on Twitter.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/canada-oks-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-booster-dose-5-11-year-olds-2022-08-19/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

China's Virus Hotspots Keep Cases Elevated, Fuel Fears of Spread

China reported its worst week of Covid infections since mid-May, fueled by outbreaks in vacation hotspots that risk spreading across the country as travelers return. The country reported 2,678 cases for Thursday, down from 3,424 a day earlier. Still, there were more than 18,000 new local infections in the seven days through Aug. 18, China's worst week since mid-May, amid outbreaks in Hainan, Tibet and Xinjiang that stranded tourists and threw the travel plans of thousands of people into disarray.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-19/china-s-virus-hotspots-keep-cases-elevated-fuel-fears-of-spread>

Covid 19 Omicron outbreak: 3302 new cases, 10 virus-related deaths as subvariant takes over Aotearoa

There are 3302 new community cases of Covid-19 in New Zealand today, the Ministry of Health reports. There have been a further 10 deaths of people with Covid, with 467 people in hospital and seven in ICU. The seven-day rolling average of hospitalisations is 515, while last Saturday there were 594 people in hospital. The spread of people in hospital by area includes: Northland: 17; Waitematā: 61; Counties Manukau: 39; Auckland: 54; Waikato: 76; Bay of Plenty: 19; Lakes: 11; Hawke's Bay: 41; MidCentral: 25; Whanganui: 4; Taranaki: 8; Tairāwhiti: 1; Wairarapa: 3; Capital & Coast: 19; Hutt Valley: 15; Nelson Marlborough: 6; Canterbury: 40; West Coast: 4; South Canterbury: 6; Southern: 18. There are now a total of 1824 deaths confirmed as attributable to Covid, either as the underlying cause of death or as a contributing factor.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-omicron-outbreak-3302-new-cases-10-virus-related-deaths-as-subvariant-takes-over-aotearoa/32YMDVGNEN5BLGWNAHIHUXPRRA/>

Chinese mainland reports 578 new local confirmed COVID-19 cases

The Chinese mainland on Friday reported 578 locally-transmitted confirmed COVID-19 cases, of which 469 were in Hainan Province, the National Health Commission said Saturday

<https://english.news.cn/20220820/4d74a75bde744beb80114c8b13a787ba/c.html>

UK Covid-19 infections at lowest level for two months

Covid-19 infections in the UK have fallen to their lowest level for two months, in fresh evidence the current wave of the virus is receding, figures show. The number of patients in hospital with Covid-19 is also continuing to drop, though health experts warned infections are likely to rise again in the autumn and winter. A new booster jab will be offered to everyone in the UK aged 50 and over from next month, as well as those with underlying health conditions, to increase protection ahead of future waves. A total of 1.7 million people in private households are estimated to have had Covid-19 in the week to August 8, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/office-for-national-statistics-covid-england-northern-ireland-north-east-b2148505.html>

Sask.'s 1st monthly COVID-19 report details increase in confirmed outbreaks, hospital admissions

Saskatchewan's first monthly COVID-19 epidemiology report, released Thursday, says 27 people with the virus died from July 17 to Aug. 13. The number of confirmed outbreaks in the province jumped to 46 in this reporting period from three in the previous three weeks. Saskatchewan only tracks outbreaks at long-term care and personal care homes — or where the risk of severe health outcomes is the highest. In those facilities outbreaks are declared when at least one person (a patient, resident or health-care worker) tests positive for COVID-19.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/covid-19-sask-data-1.6555678>

Hong Kong Reopens Major Covid Site as Cases Hit Four-Month High

Hong Kong will reopen one of its biggest Covid-19 isolation facilities as case numbers hit the highest in more than four months, putting strain on the hospital system and sparking uncertainty around whether the city can further ease virus policies. Officials will have an additional 200 beds at Asia World Expo starting next week, with 100 health care workers to staff the facility, Lau Ka-hin, chief manager of quality and standards at the Hospital Authority, said at a briefing on Friday. It's part of a new stage of Covid management to alleviate pressure on the health-care system. Non-emergency services at hospitals will also be further reduced in order to free up beds and manpower, he said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-19/hong-kong-reopens-major-covid-site-as-cases-hit-four-month-high>