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Ministry of Health informs about the coronavirus: Schleswig-Holstein prohibits events with more than 1,000 people

A press release from the state government: Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Youth, Family and Senior Citizens. (translation provided by Kiel University; the original, German-language decree of the Ministry is binding)

The Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Health provides regular information updates on the coronavirus. As announced yesterday, the state has reviewed further measures to curb the process of infection related to events. The state cabinet, acting on a proposal from the Minister of Health, Heiner Garg, has today approved a relevant decree to the health authorities in the districts and self-governing cities. Accordingly, events with more than 1,000 participants are prohibited with immediate effect. The legal basis is the Infection Protection Act (Section 28 para. 1).

Minister of Health, Heiner Garg emphasised: "The state government is very aware that this is a wide-ranging measure. But the dynamics of the events in Germany justify this step. The situation is serious, and all parties must make a contribution to prepare our healthcare system for the expected increase in cases of illness. Reducing contact and the resulting delay in transmission is an important step."

The cancellation of major events and related contact-reducing measures will help to influence the spread of the disease. The goal is to interrupt chains of infection. Due to the predominant transmission mechanism (droplet infection), human-to-human transmission is easily possible, e.g. by coughing or sneezing, even from mildly ill or asymptptomatically infected people. A high risk is present every time the number of participants is high. Schools, workplaces or public transport, which do not constitute events in this context, are not affected by the ban.

With regard to smaller events, the ministry recommends that organisers review the necessity and proportionality of the events themselves, while at the same time considering the RKI criteria. This review should include: 1. Is the event necessary? 2. Is the event proportionate to the risk involved? (type of participants, nature of the location, people with pre-existing conditions, contact intensity...). The goal here is also to implement contact-reducing measures - but this also means that events which cannot be postponed and which are necessary for the smooth running of state activities can take place. On the other hand, other events should be carefully reviewed by the organisers to determine if they should be postponed, presented in a different format or cancelled completely, in order to reduce the paths of infection.

The ministry also reminds of the instruction it issued yesterday to the districts and self-governing cities, to issue similar instructions for contact-reducing measures in particularly relevant facilities throughout the state, with the affected parties in the state now providing relevant information.

Also, in principle, visits to relatives in hospitals and nursing/elderly care facilities should currently be avoided as far as possible in order to minimise the risk of infection. This restriction also helps to make sure that the limited resources of protective clothing are used where they are needed most, namely for providing health and medical care.