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COVID-19: Don't scrap indoor-facemask mandate says GIMBE

Virus is circulating too much says medical foundation

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(ANSA) - ROME, APR 21 - Nino Cartabellotta, the president of the GIMBE medical foundation, on Thursday called on the government to keep the obligation for people to wear facemasks in enclosed public places in Italy, saying the level of COVID-19 contagion remains too high to scrap it.

The obligation to wear facemasks indoors is set to expire at the end of this month, although the government has indicated it may remain, or at least become a recommendation, in some situations, such as on public transport.

"The circulation of the virus is still very high," Cartabellotta said as he presented GIMBE's weekly coronavirus monitoring report.

"The number of people currently positive is over 1.2 million and this is an underestimation.

"There are over 50,000 new cases a day and the positivity rate is over 15%.

"As a result, abolishing facemasks in enclosed spaces is a highly reckless decision".

The report said 353,193 new COVID cases were registered in Italy in the April 13-19 period, down 19.5% on the 438,751 reported the previous week, although the number of tests done also dropped by 20% due to the Easter holiday.

It said the number of COVID patients in intensive care in Italy dropped by 8.9% from 463 on April 13 to 422 on April 19.

It said 861 COVID-linked deaths were recorded in Italy in this period, down 7.3% on the 929 of the previous week.

The report said 4.2 million people in Italy who are eligible to be vaccinated had still not had their first dose while another two million had not had their third dose. (ANSA).

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