

# The Rise and Rise of Health Power in a Pandemic World

## KEVIN BÜRCHLER

Kevin Bürchler is the Head of Key Accounts at the SIP Medical Family Office<sup>®</sup>, the world's leading experts for international health insurance and health management.



In modern history, passports and visas have become crucial documents that enable and restrict global mobility. While holding a strong passport remains an asset of unquestionable importance in securing freedom of travel and settlement rights, a new factor has come into play over the past 22 months that may soon supersede your passport in terms of facilitating ease of travel – your health status.

## Covid-19's unavoidable effect on global travel

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Access to stable and high-quality healthcare jurisdictions that allow us to safely sit out a global pandemic has established itself as a key issue in the minds of affluent private investors. In parallel, new leverage has emerged from holding a second or even third residence permit or citizenship – quicker access to vaccinations, for example, or the ability to enter safer countries with top healthcare providers. A global vaccine hierarchy is emerging.

## Vaccine power – A growing trend

By September 2021, more than 20 vaccines had been approved worldwide. However, only seven are currently approved for use by the World Health Organization (WHO). This underlines the emerging vaccine power trend, which will have long-term effects on global mobility that are difficult to evaluate. Furthermore, vaccine power is not to be mistaken with security against infections or protection against severe infection progression, but rather it should be understood in the context of acceptance by organizations and governments globally.

AstraZeneca's non-replicating viral vector vaccine ranks number one, having been approved by more than 120 countries. Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine is currently approved in 98 countries, Russia's Sputnik in 71 countries, and Moderna in 69 countries worldwide. Having access to vaccines with the widest spread approval and acceptance rate may result in higher health security, but also in more convenience during travels.

Japan and Singapore rank joint 1<sup>st</sup> in the Henley Passport Index. Japan approves and provides access to three vaccines including AstraZeneca, Pfizer-BioNTech, and Takeda, which has to date been approved only in Japan. Singapore has approved Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech. South Korea has approved four vaccines, placing itself on a par with Germany. Both countries, which rank joint 2<sup>nd</sup> in the index, have authorized and provide to their residents the AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines.

While some of the European countries that host popular residence and citizenship by investment programs such as Malta, Portugal, Spain, and the UK approve and provide their residents with access to four different vaccines, the Caribbean island nations appear to be more limited in their offerings.

Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Lucia have approved only one or, at most, two different vaccines.

The rising vaccine power and vaccine hierarchy trends may result in changes in perception in terms of the value of acquiring residence or citizenship of a particular country. The freedom and privilege to select which vaccine one receives may be reserved for a select group of people who have the requisite residence status or citizenship.

## Vaccines are key to greater travel freedom

Holding a Covid-19 vaccination certificate has established itself as a prerequisite to upholding some global mobility privileges. While the number of vaccinated people globally continues to rise, vaccination rates are slowing down and even stagnating in certain regions. To sustain vaccination rates and achieve the highest protection measures, even Western democratic governments have started to develop systems that distinguish between vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals. Such classifications may come with certain privileges for those who are vaccinated and disadvantages for those who are not. It is clear that many states will significantly reduce the personal freedom of non-vaccinated people to a yet unknown degree. There is no doubt that we will see a global vaccination hierarchy of countries in the near future.

The extent to which individual freedom can and will be reduced, and the strictness of future lockdowns and other control measures that may be implemented in different countries, may result in increased international relocation by those who are able to move. The freedom to manage one's health without government involvement, and the freedom to move across borders whether or not one is vaccinated, will face new restrictions. This will lead to new choices, including permanently moving one's residence to another place where, perhaps, individual rights and freedoms are more protected than in others, or one has better access to healthcare — or both.

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