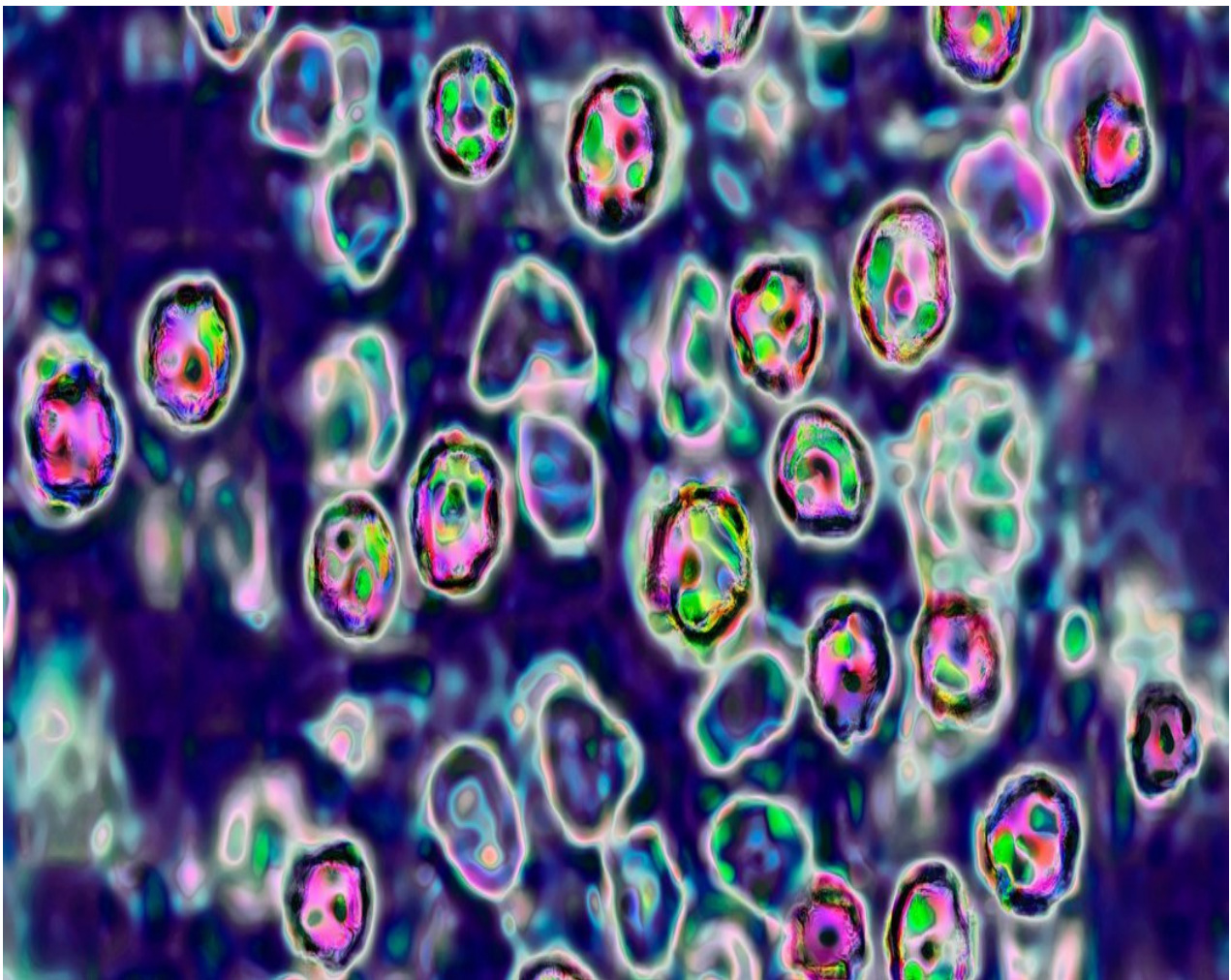


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. Of Health Holds Training To Prepare Healthcare Workers In Event Of Measles Outbreak In Territory

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Taking steps to prepare the territory ahead of a possible measles outbreak in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Department of Health has advised physicians, nurses and other healthcare workers on St. Croix of an important training/update on measles to be held at the Juan F. Luis Hospital on Friday at 8:30 a.m. Doctors and other health care providers, including school nurses or administrators, are strongly urged to attend so that the health care response to this potential threat is unified throughout the territory, D.O.H. said.

According to information shared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 839 cases of measles occurred in 23 states between January 1 and May 10. Of these cases, 752 occurred among unvaccinated individuals or persons with an unknown

vaccination status. Importantly, the median age of cases is 5 years (range 1 day to 72 years), and 56% of cases are in individuals aged 16 months to 19 years. A total of 76 individuals or 9% of the total cases required hospitalization, D.O.H. said, citing the CDC.

D.O.H. said MMR vaccinations for children are available locally at the Maternal Child Health facilities at either the Charles Harwood Interim Complex (St. Croix) or the Elaineo Building (St. Thomas). The Department of Health said it uses a sliding fee scale for vaccinations with most infant and child immunizations rendered free at most public health clinics.

The following list of providers offer the adult MMR vaccine:

St. Thomas

- Dr. Luis Amaro (Foothills Professional Building)
- Dr. Carolyn Jones (Al Cohen Plaza)
- Red Hook Family Practice
- Yacht Haven Family Practice
- St. Thomas East End Medical Center
- Caricare Family Health Services (Paragon Building)
- Dr. Jessica Wilson (Paragon Building)

St. John

- Cruz Bay Family Practice

St. Croix

- Frederiksted Healthcare (Frederiksted and Mid-Island locations)
- Dr. Arakere Prasad, Primary Care PLLC(Princess)

Measles complications include diarrhea, otitis media (eye problems), pneumonia (in 1-6 % of cases), encephalitis (1 case per 1,000 cases) and death (1-3 per 1,000 cases). Cases of subacute sclerosing panencephalitis, a rare form of chronic progressive brain inflammation, are also noted to occur in 1 out of 100,000 cases about 7 to10 years after having a measles episode, the department said.

D.O.H., together with the St. Thomas East End Medical Center and Schneider Regional Medical Center, provided a clinical measles update to healthcare providers in the St. Thomas/St. John district last week.