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4,355 Covid-19 Vaccines Have Been Administered in Territory; Health Commissioner Pleased With Rollout

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V.I. Department of Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion expressed satisfaction with the way Covid-19 vaccines are being distributed in the territory. Speaking during the Bryan administration's weekly Covid-19 response update Thursday, the commissioner said, "Support of the vaccine rollout has been tremendous and participation from individuals from Phase 1A and 1B is very encouraging." Providers across the territory have administered 4,355 first doses and 294 second doses of Covid-19 vaccines, she revealed.

While D.O.H said in a [press release](#) that it halted the distribution of a batch of vaccines, Ms. Encarnacion said there were no reports of unexpected or adverse effects within the territory.

D.O.H. late Wednesday announced that it would stop administering vaccine doses it received from a particular batch of the Moderna drug, the same vaccine batch sent to counties across California that is blamed for a higher than usual number of recipients responding with severe allergic reactions.

"The Virgin Islands Department of Health is carefully monitoring the reports out of California of possible adverse reactions from a particular Moderna lot (041L20A). We have received vaccine allotments from this identified lot/batch in the territory. Fortunately, we have not had any reports of unexpected or severe adverse effects within the territory or among the individuals vaccinated from this specific supply," said the department.

The Consortium [reported on the California matter Tuesday](#). In a statement issued by the California Dept. of Health (CDPH) Sunday, state health officials recommended that local providers pause administration of lot 41L20A of Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine, after "fewer than 10" recipients at one community center required medical attention over a 24-hour period last week. The statement said the victims appeared to be suffering a severe allergic reaction after receiving the dose.

The lot, which includes more than 330,000 doses of the vaccine, was being reviewed by federal health and drug officials, and local officials have adhered to the request of pausing administration until the lot's safety has been assessed.

A slide during the commissioner's time at the press briefing said the territory as of Thursday was in Phase 1B of the Covid-19 vaccination rollout. "Phases do not have hard starts and stops and are in effect concurrently," read the slide.

Speaking on the administering of vaccines, Ms. Encarnacion said two doses of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are required and must be taken as directed. She explained that if your first dose was the Pfizer version, your second dose must be from Pfizer. The same strategy goes for the Moderna shot. "The first dose helps the immune system respond to the virus, the second dose, taken weeks after, further boosts the immune system for long-term protection from the virus," according to D.O.H.

The full list of eligible groups and a list of vaccine providers can be found [here](#).

Ms. Encarnacion explained that the travel requirement that calls for air passengers arriving to the United States from any international destination to provide evidence of Covid-19 test, does not apply to USVI travelers to the mainland.

There were 115 active cases in the territory as of Thursday, with 65 being on St. Croix, 36 being on St. Thomas and 14 on St. John. Since Covid-19 testing began, the territory has administered 39,877 tests with 2,305 of those tests returning positive, a positivity rate of 5.7.

A list of testing sites can be found [here](#).

