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Governor Sees 2021-2022 Crucian Christmas Festival Happening as Vaccination Drive Holds Steady

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Kyle Murphy **March 23, 2021**

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St. Croix Adults Parade in 2017 By. IRENE ALI FOR THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CONSORTIUM

Since the opening of the territory's vaccination centers at University of the Virgin Islands campuses in both St. Thomas and St. Croix, 7,199 vaccines have been administered at the sites with St. Thomas accounting for over 5,000 shots, announced Dept. of Health Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis. Dr. Ellis revealed the latest numbers during the Government House weekly press briefing on Monday.

Total vaccinations as of Monday climbed to 33,826 territory-wide, though the figure includes Americans living on the mainland who travel to the USVI to get vaccinated.

Dr. Ellis said the latest tally puts the Virgin Islands on track to meet or exceed Governor Albert Bryan's mandate of vaccinating 50,000 people by June 1.

Asked to give an estimate on when the territory would begin to see easing of restrictions based on the number of vaccinations being administered, Dr. Ellis said, "We will know when we get there," adding that herd immunity, which translates to about 60 percent of the population being vaccinated, would lead to a dip in cases and the positivity rate which stood at 4 percent as of Monday because of a [recent surge on St. Croix](#).

Mr. Bryan interjected to state that the question might have been better suited for him as he is the one with the final say. The governor said he was optimistic that the Crucian Christmas Festival for 2021-22 could be held, expressing hope that the territory's positivity rate will drop to 1 percent by June so he could start easing restrictions.

While there were 33,826 total shots administered as of Monday, Mr. Bryan said about 10,000 of those were second-dose shots, meaning the remaining 23,000 plus people still needed to be vaccinated a second time to be fully protected.

The numbers sound promising but there is concern in the community that the data might not be a good way to track how many residents have been inoculated because of the vaccine tourism effect. Mr. Bryan wasn't too concerned. "We are seeing 90-100 walk-in appointments each island per day and we are able to serve them," he said. Speaking on the percentage of vaccine tourism's effect on the territory, he said, "If we had to give it a number I doubt it would pass 3 percent."

Persons interested in booking a vaccine appointment can do so online [here](#) or call the VITEMA hotline at 340-227-8227.