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Puerto Rico Reopens Bars, Nightclubs and Other Venues For First Time Since Pandemic Started

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Puerto Rico has eased restrictions to allow nightclubs, bars and other entertainment venues — including party buses — to operate for the first time since the pandemic started in March 2020, the Puerto Rico government has announced.

Those venues will be allowed to operate at 50 percent capacity, stated the U.S. territory's governor Pedro Pierluisi last week, who also eased the mask-wearing mandate for vaccinated individuals, stating that they would no longer need to wear a mask while outdoors, though the restriction remains in place for anyone entering businesses, according to the Associate Press.

"We're getting closer to normal," the governor declared, even as he cautioned, "we can't claim victory yet."

The easing of restrictions takes effect today and are set to last through July 4, which is Independence Day.

As of last week, Puerto Rico, whose population is 3.3 million, reported 139,068 confirmed cases of Covid-19, 2,519 deaths and a testing positivity rate of 38.88 percent. Nearly 50 percent of the island's population is vaccinated.

In comparison the U.S. Virgin Islands, whose population is just over 100,000, reported 3,591 confirmed cases, 28 deaths and a positivity rate of just over 3 percent, according to most recent data. As of last week, 40,649 individuals had obtained at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine in the USVI, which meant that 51.3 percent of the population had at least one dose, while 32,522 individuals were fully vaccinated, or 41 percent.