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Outbreaks In Daycare Centers and School-Age Children Lead to Most Recent High Number of Active Covid Infections

Coronavirus / **Published On September 28, 2021 05:42 AM /**

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D.O.H. Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis said Monday that health officials were seeing a high number of active cases among children and young adults on St. Croix. She said a majority of the cases last week were in the 0-17 age group.

She reported that the current median age of all positive cases in the USVI was 27.5 years as of Monday, and that contributing factors include outbreaks within daycare centers and school-age children, with outbreaks among the latter being attributed to household exposures.

Dr. Ellis encouraged parents to get their children vaccinated against Covid-19 if they are eligible. "It is especially important for children 12 and up as well as those that work with children to get

vaccinated and keep our schools safe and our students safe,” she said. Dr. Ellis also urged parents with children 11 and under to get vaccinated themselves, which she said would help keep children safe.

D.O.H. reported 190 active cases territory, with 139 on St. Croix, 46 on St. Thomas and 5 on St. John.

There were three Covid-19 hospitalized patients territory-wide, with one patient requiring a ventilator on St. Croix, while one of the two patients at the Schneider Regional Medical Center in St. Thomas was ventilated.

Booster Shots

D.O.H. started the administration last week of booster shots for immunocompromised individuals, people age 65 and older, health care and longterm facility workers who completed their vaccination at least eight months ago, according to Dr. Ellis. She said D.O.H. would continue to administer third-dose vaccination for immunocompromised individuals for all three vaccines approved in the U.S.: Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

Third-dose vaccination is different from booster shots, even though they serve the same purpose of boosting one's immunity against Covid-19. Currently, third-dose vaccination has been approved for the immunocompromised, while the booster shot, currently only available from Pfizer, has been approved for the groups mentioned earlier in the paragraph above.

Pfizer and BioNTech said last week that their Covid-19 vaccine is safe for use in children between ages 5-11, and the companies are seeking emergency authorization for use in the U.S. and other countries. “We will announce that once it has been approved and will be offered here for that younger age group,” said Dr. Ellis on Monday.