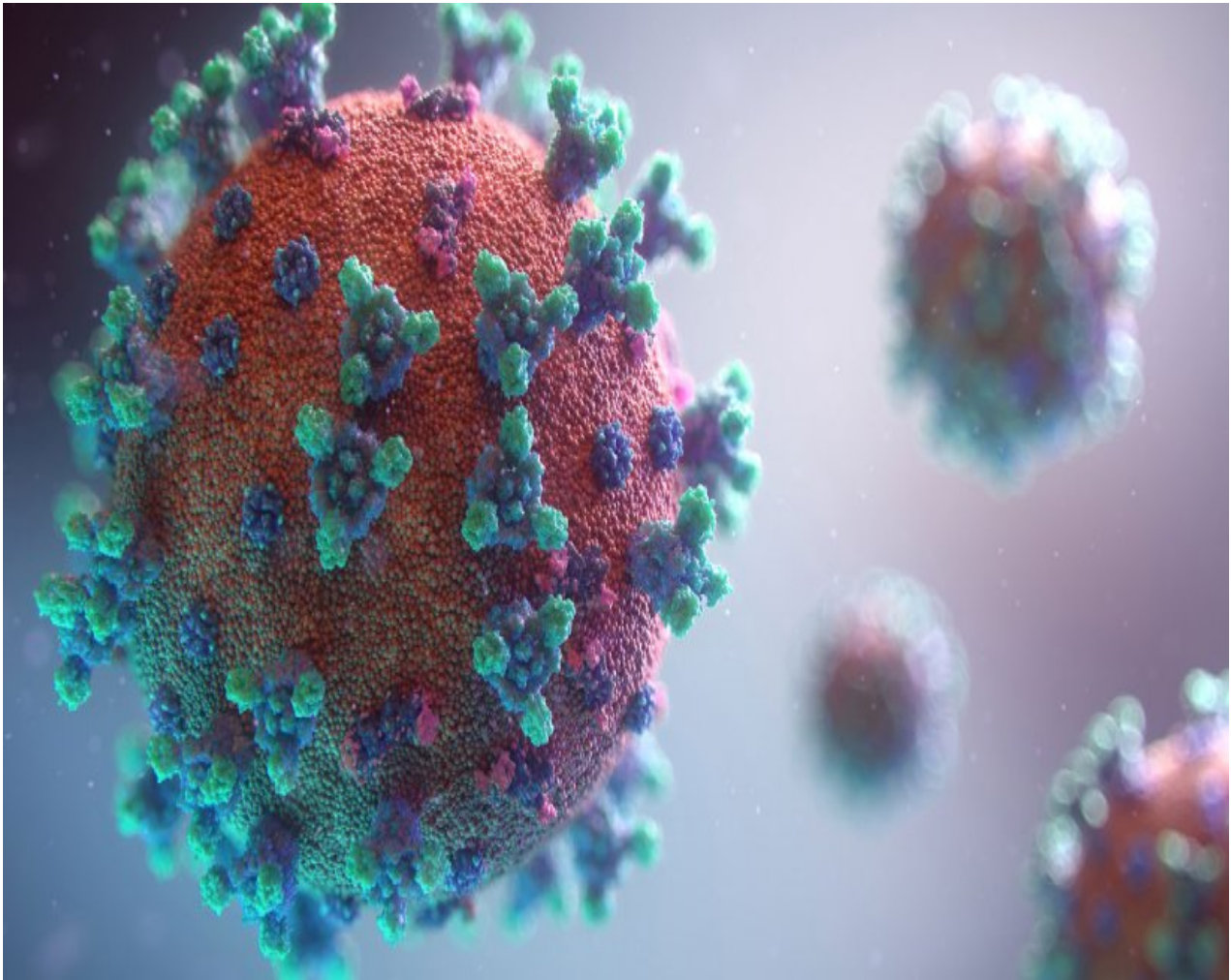


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Covid-19 Cases See Slight Decline, But Data Not Yet Indicative of Downward Trend

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Coronavirus cases saw a slight drop in the U.S. Virgin Islands Monday, declining to 3,713 from Saturday's 3,782, a difference of 69 cases. The decline is not indicative of a broader trend downwards, at least not yet, as a better understanding of infection rate in the USVI is usually determined midweek when reporting is optimal.

According to [data provided by](#) the V.I. Dept. of Health, St. Croix accounted for 1,768 cases, followed by St. Thomas with 1,692, and St. John with 253.

Governor Albert Bryan announced Monday an extension through January 25 of restrictions he put in place two weeks ago, which saw bars and restaurants stopping the

sale of alcohol at 11:00 p.m. and closing down at midnight. He also announced that gov't office closures for in-person services would be extended through Jan. 25 as well.

Also remaining in place is the requirement to secure a Covid-19 test within 72-hours of a flight to the USVI, a restriction that is enforced across the board for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, along with residents and visitors. This restriction is set to expire by the end of January, barring any changes.

"I know some of you are inconvenienced by the scale back of our office hours, but we just want to ensure the safety of our employees by reducing interactions with the public," Mr. Bryan said Monday. "Just like everybody else in the territory, we're facing staffing challenges as well as more and more of our personnel are infected with Covid-19. And rather than shut down totally, we're staggering hours and being able to keep people in."

A list of gov't offices whose in-person schedules have been impacted because of the spread of the Omicron variant can be found [here](#).

The governor spoke of the burdensome requirement of securing a Covid-19 test within 72 hours of traveling to the USVI, a situation that has been exacerbated by the lack of available test kits or facilities because of the rapid surge in active cases. "I know it was very strenuous for a lot of people, and our apologies, but we're just trying to keep the majority of people safe. So it's still [getting a Covid-19 test within 72 hours] to get into the territory, whether you're vaccinated or not," he said.

There were no changes made to beach protocols, meaning beaches will remain open. "We're hoping this surge subsides quickly, but if what we're seeing globally and nationally is any indication, I think we still have at least a week or so of riding this out and then hopefully it will expire sometime around the next two weeks in terms of starting to go down," Mr. Bryan said.

The territory's positivity rate was 24.30 percent as of Monday, according to Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion. She said vaccination rates and persons taking booster Covid-19 shots have increased as the Omicron-driven wave of cases continues.