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As JFL Works to Decrease Wait Times, Hospital Pleads With Public Not to Misuse E.R. For Covid-19 if Not Experiencing Symptoms

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The Juan F. Luis Hospital Emergency Room, also called the Emergency Department.
By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM

The Juan F. Luis Hospital on Friday asked the community not to visit the hospital's Emergency Department for Covid-19 testing if they are asymptomatic. The call is part of the hospital's efforts to decrease wait times at the E.R., according to [new hospital CEO Doug Koch](#), who spoke on the matter during a Senate hearing Friday.

"We ask the listening and viewing public not to misuse the Emergency Department for Covid-19 tests when you are asymptomatic or not experiencing any symptoms," Mr. Koch said. "Use of the

Emergency Department should be reserved for persons who are experiencing severe symptoms. Please be reminded that your Emergency Department wait times are determined based on each waiting person's care needs, which are determined by a "Severity Index." The less of an emergency you are experiencing, the longer your wait will be," the executive further explained.

According to Mr. Koch, the hospital managed 11,510 patient visits to the E.R. in 2021. So far in 2022, from Jan. 1-10, JFL has seen 341 patients in the E.R. Of this total, 137 received a Covid-19 test and 39 percent, or roughly 53 people were positive for the virus.

"All of the above factors have an effect on wait times in the E.D.," he said. "We are working to recruit Emergency Department and laboratory personnel so that we may remedy these wait times and ensure higher patient satisfaction."

As of Friday there were 2,239 active cases of Covid-19 territory-wide, up 70 from Thursday's 2,169, according [data](#) provided by the V.I. Dept. of Health. St. Croix accounted for 1,086 of those cases, followed by St. Thomas with 969, and St. John with 184. The USVI's 7-day positivity rate stood at 16.89 percent, up slightly from Thursday's 16.18 percent.