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Beginning March 1 Most Covid Restrictions in USVI, Except Mask Mandate and Travel Portal Will be Gone, Governor Bryan Says

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Torn caution tape signaling the end of Covid-19 restrictions. By. GETTY IMAGES

As the world continues to ease restrictions put in place to mitigate spread of Covid-19, the U.S. Virgin Islands — where cases are down more than 90 percent from the peak realized early Jan. during the Omicron surge of the virus — is heading back to a level of normalcy that will see most restrictions being removed beginning March 1.

That's according to Governor Albert Bryan, who on Thursday told the Consortium that March 1, which falls on a Tuesday, will herald a level of normalcy not seen throughout the two-year-old global health emergency.

"We are working on a plan that should have most restrictions except mask [mandate] and [the USVI Travel] Portal gone by March 1," Mr. Bryan said. "This would include all government employees returning to work and all schools going to full schedule."

The governor [late last month](#) told the Consortium the territory would revert to restrictions put in place before the Omicron surge by early February, however, Mr. Bryan hasn't announced any changes aside for [individuals traveling to the territory](#). Asked for an update, the governor on Friday told the Consortium work was still being done on the new order. "We continue to monitor so we don't misstep," he said.

In the U.S. Virgin Islands, cases led by the Omicron surge are down 93 percent. The percentage is determined using the highest number of infections reached at the peak of the surge, [which was 3,872 on Jan. 8](#), and the current number of active cases which [stood at 264 as of Friday](#). St. Croix accounted for 155 of those cases, followed by St. Thomas with 97, and St. John with 12. The territory's seven-day positivity rate stood at 4.87 percent.

Governments in many jurisdictions around the world are moving to lift Covid mandates as the Omicron surge recedes and the virus, now more than ever before, appears to be in its waning days. Though health experts expect Covid-19 to be around for years to come, it will become an endemic, where the virus continues to exist at a baseline level with pockets of breakouts that can be controlled.

In the U.S., Democrat-led states that once held among the strictest Covid-induced restrictions are moving swiftly to lift them, including ending indoor mask mandates.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of Americans with new cases of Covid-19 fell to 202,001 on Feb. 9, down from 860,860 four weeks earlier, on Jan. 12. The CDC said its estimates show that the Omicron variant was likely responsible for 99.9 percent infections in the week ended Jan. 29.

Schools across the United States have responded to the new data by dropping mask mandates and easing Covid-19 testing regimes. The changes are geared toward keeping up with the evolving character of the pandemic and the changing wishes of students, families and teachers, said Dan Domenech, executive director of AASA, the School Superintendents Association (via WSJ).