

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan to Announce Easing of Covid Restrictions Today at 1 p.m.; Watch Live on the Consortium

Coronavirus / **Published On February 28, 2022 06:40 AM /**

Staff Consortium **February 28, 2022**



Governor Albert Bryan will announce today major changes in his administration's Covid-19 guidelines that Mr. Bryan has told the Consortium "should have most restrictions except mask [mandate] and [the USVI Travel] Portal gone by March 1."

The governor's announcements will precede those of President Joe Biden's State of the Union address set for Tuesday, where the president is expected to also layout a new phase in the fight against Covid-19.

Mr. Bryan's announcements today will come on the heels of [new Covid-19 masking guidelines](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which on Friday said

masking is no longer required in schools and indoors where cases of Covid-19 are low or moderate.

According to the CDC, a population of 100,000 people will be considered at low risk if the seven-day positivity rate in that population is at or below 10 percent; and if the percentage of staffed inpatient beds occupied by Covid-19 patients is fewer than 200 based on a seven-day average.

In the U.S. Virgin Islands, where the seven-day positivity rate was at 2.38 percent as of Friday and the USVI population is 87,146 according to [the latest Census](#), the territory is well within the low transmission category. There were 108 active cases in all of the U.S. Virgin Islands as of Friday, with 73 on St. Croix, 31 on St. Thomas and 4 on St. John, [according to the V.I. Dept. of Health](#).

Additionally, the CDC only recommends universal school masking in communities where Covid-19 is high. The CDC said its new guidance on school masking is based on data that continue to show children are at low risk of severe disease and mostly exhibit asymptomatic or mild infections, according to Greta Massetti of the CDC's Covid-19 Response (via the Wall Street Journal).

"We need to be able to relax our layered prevention measures when things are looking up," said CDC Director Rochelle Walensky. "And we need to be able to dial them again... should we have a new variant or surge."

The V.I. Dept. of Health, which has mostly followed CDC guidelines, may take a different approach to masking when Mr. Bryan announces his own easing of restrictions.

Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion hinted as much to the Consortium Friday evening. "I think it is important for every Virgin Islander and the residents of the Virgin Islands to understand that we are not connected to the contiguous United States, and we have to make sure that we protect our community," she said. "And whatever decision we make, we're going to make sure that we do it in the best interest [of the public], to make sure that they're comfortable — because I know that people are tired of wearing mask at this point in time — but that they are also safe."

Watch the press event live on the Consortium's Facebook platform [here](#), or on our website beginning at 1:00 p.m.