

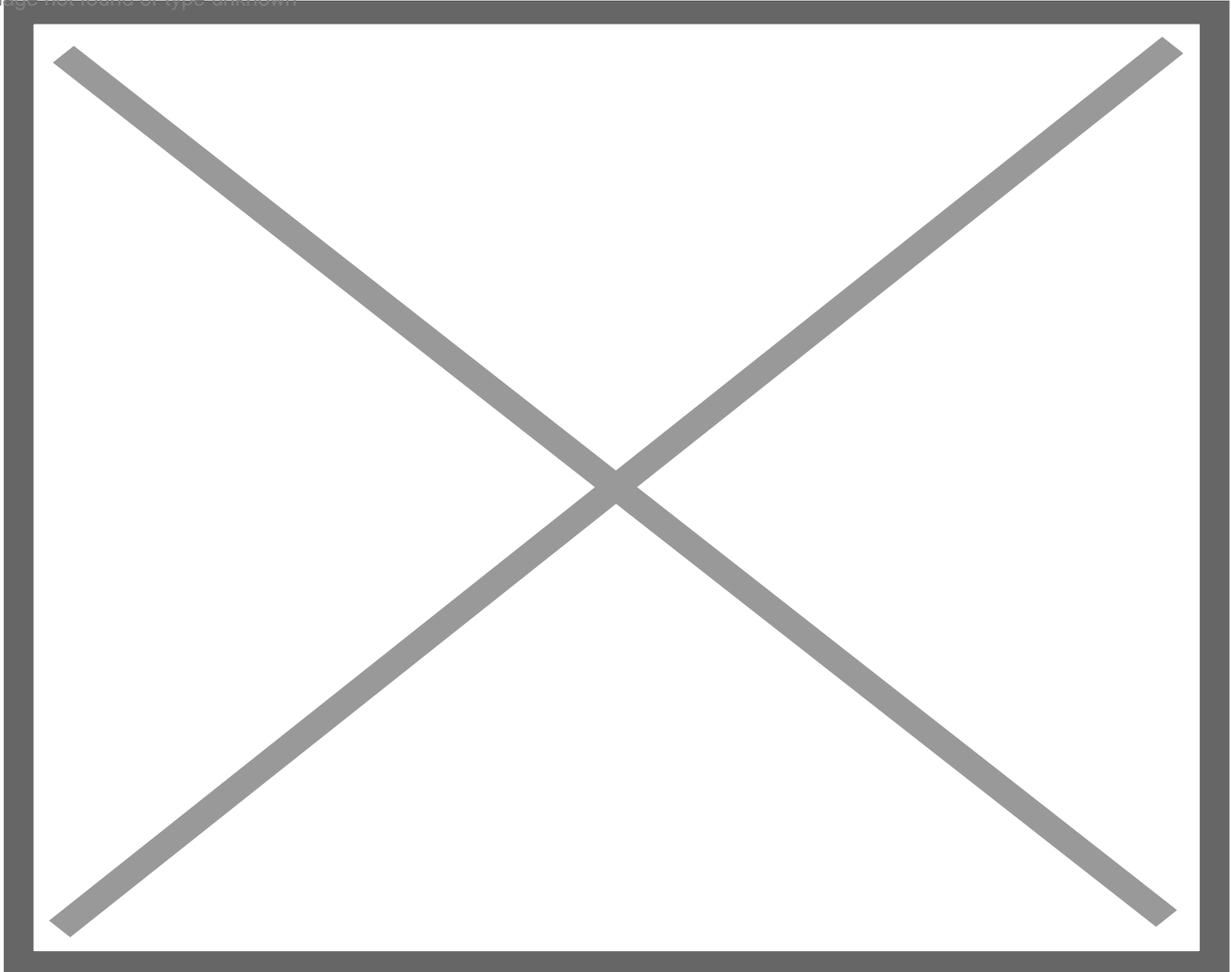
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Covid Cases Fall Below 50 Territory-Wide

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Doctors and nurses celebrating senior man leaving a hospital after recovery. By. GETTY IMAGES

Covid-19 continues to recede in the U.S. Virgin Islands, with the V.I. Dept. of Health reporting the lowest level of active infections [since early December](#) as the virus moves from pandemic toward endemic status.

According to D.O.H. [data](#) published Monday, there were 41 active Covid-19 cases territory-wide: 26 on St. Croix, 14 on St. Thomas and 1 on St. John. Additionally, the territory's positivity rate [fell to 1.39 percent](#).

Two individuals were hospitalized at the Juan F. Luis Hospital, one of whom was vented as of Monday, and one patient at the Schneider Regional Medical Center who was not vented. There

have been no deaths within the last two weeks, though [109 people have died](#) of complications related to the virus.

Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion said cases continue to trend down even after a number of activities were held following Governor Albert Bryan's [decision to ease restrictions](#).

"We have had a bit of increased activities since the governor relaxed some of the Covid-19 protocols, and yet we continue to trend down towards zero positives territory-wide," she said.

The administration has kept in place indoor masking for now, though Mr. Bryan has told the Consortium that the requirement would be dropped soon.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [on February 25](#) announced that it has changed how it measures Covid-19 risk, with the new metrics including assessments that considers three risk factors: new Covid-19 cases per 100,000 residents in the past seven days; new Covid-related hospitalizations; and the percentage of hospital beds occupied by Covid-19 patients.

The CDC guidelines say wearing masks indoors isn't necessary where Covid-19 transmission is low. Where transmission is at medium levels, persons with conditions that place them in the high-risk category of severe illness from Covid-19 should seek guidance from their healthcare provider regarding whether to wear a mask. For areas with high levels of Covid-19 transmission, people should continue wearing masks in public settings and in schools.

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 1.39 percent as of Monday and the USVI population is 87,146 according to [the latest Census](#), the territory is well within the low transmission category.

See CDC chart below detailing the [new metrics](#):

~~new-mask-metrics-CDC-VIC~~

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.