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USVI Positivity Rate Below 1 Percent as Covid-19 Cases Recede

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The territory's Covid-19 seven-day positivity rate stood at 0.84 percent on Friday, as the virus's spread continues to diminish to extremely low levels.

According to the V.I. Dept. of Health, there were 32 active cases territory-wide Friday, including 17 on St. Croix, 14 on St. Thomas and 1 on St. John.

These are some of the lowest numbers in the U.S. Virgin Islands since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020.

Going based on encouraging data, leaders across the U.S. have been easing some of the last Covid-19 restrictions, including the indoor mask mandate.

Locally, the Bryan 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.

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.”