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## St. Thomas Sees Covid-19 Surge Linked to Outbreak at School, Lifting Territory-Wide Caseload to 82

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Coronavirus cases in the U.S. Virgin Islands are up nearly 50 percent from a week ago, an increase the V.I. Department of Health has said is [tied to an outbreak](#) at the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School in St. Thomas.

According to D.O.H., as of Tuesday there were 82 active cases territory-wide, with St. Thomas representing the majority of cases with 55, followed by St. Croix with 18, and St. John with 9. For comparison, between March 27-28, St. Thomas had 11 active cases while St. Croix had 31. At the time, St. John had none. The territory's current seven-day positivity rate stands at 2.70 percent, up from 2.10 percent from just over a week ago.

Local health officials continue to remind that the virus remains present in the territory and that though restrictions have been lifted, people should still take precautions to protect themselves and the wider community.

The health department has not confirmed the new Omicron variant in the U.S. Virgin Islands, called BA.2, with health officials stating that test samples had been sent away to determine whether the variant was circulating locally.

Last week the BA.2 strain of Covid-19 was confirmed to be [the dominant variant in the United States](#), accounting for over half of all new infections, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The new Omicron variant, which appears to spread more easily than the original Omicron, has led to surges in Europe and the U.K., with England historically presaging Covid-19 outcomes in the United States.

According to the Wall Street Journal, research has suggested that BA.2 is similar to an earlier Omicron version when it comes to the risk of hospitalizations and developing severe disease. But research also indicates that BA.2 spreads more easily.

Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion has said that the mask mandate in schools, nursing homes, health facilities and ports of entry will remain in place for now. The USVI Travel Portal will also remain active, she said. Governor Albert Bryan told the Consortium in March that the portal would be active [until at least June](#).

Last week, the CDC [recommended](#) a second booster shot for individuals 50 years and older, a recommendation the V.I. Dept. of Health [has since adopted](#).