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USVI Travel Portal to be Discontinued June 1, Governor Bryan Confirms

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The USVI Travel Portal, launched during the Covid-19 pandemic in an attempt to minimize the spread of the virus from individuals entering the USVI, will be discontinued on Wednesday, June 1, Governor Albert Bryan confirmed to the Consortium Tuesday.

The move is significant, as it ends a requirement that many had found vexing, though it was an important tool in the administration's fight against the Coronavirus.

The decision to discontinue the portal keeps in line with comments the governor made early March when Mr. Bryan lifted the indoor mask mandate. [At the time](#), he told the Consortium that the portal would remain in place until June.

Ending the travel portal requirement further realizes the territory's new [Covid endemic status](#), an announcement made two weeks ago. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a disease is endemic when it is a constant presence in a population, follow predictable patterns and occur at an expected, baseline level. "To put it another way, an endemic disease is consistently present, but it spreads at predictable rates that can be managed by communities," said the CDC.

The seasonal Influenza, for example, is an endemic disease in the United States. Malaria is an endemic in many parts of the world, with 229 million cases reported 2019.

Dept. of Health Infectious Disease Specialist, Dr. Tai Hunte-Cesar, said the territory is "entering into a state of endemicity where Covid-19 will continuously be prevalent throughout the territory and Covid levels will rise depending on the level of activity and variants circulating among the community."

"Our current positivity rate is 15 percent. However, we are seeing a lower level of sickness in our hospitalized patients," Dr. Hunte-Cesar said. "We began our transition out of the pandemic into endemicity with the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions. So, let's continue to work together and keep each other safe by doing our part."

Yet while the administration has announced the transition to endemic Covid status, the CDC hasn't made this determination. In its latest update regarding endemic diseases, the agency said that when Covid is finally declared an endemic, this may "translate to continued mask wearing in places like public transportation, indoor settings, and offices."

Additionally, the CDC stated, "With good community efforts, high vaccination rates, and improved treatments, Covid-19 can potentially become a predictable disease that communities can cope with, much as they do the seasonal flu."

"For now, vaccination efforts remain a key step in ending the pandemic and transitioning to an endemic."

As of Tuesday there were 888 active Covid-19 infections territory-wide, an increase of 90 from Tuesday's 798 cases. St. Croix leads infection rates with 578 active cases, followed by St. Thomas with 277, and St. John with 33, according to [the V.I. Dept. of Health](#). The territory's positivity rate stood at 14.37 percent.