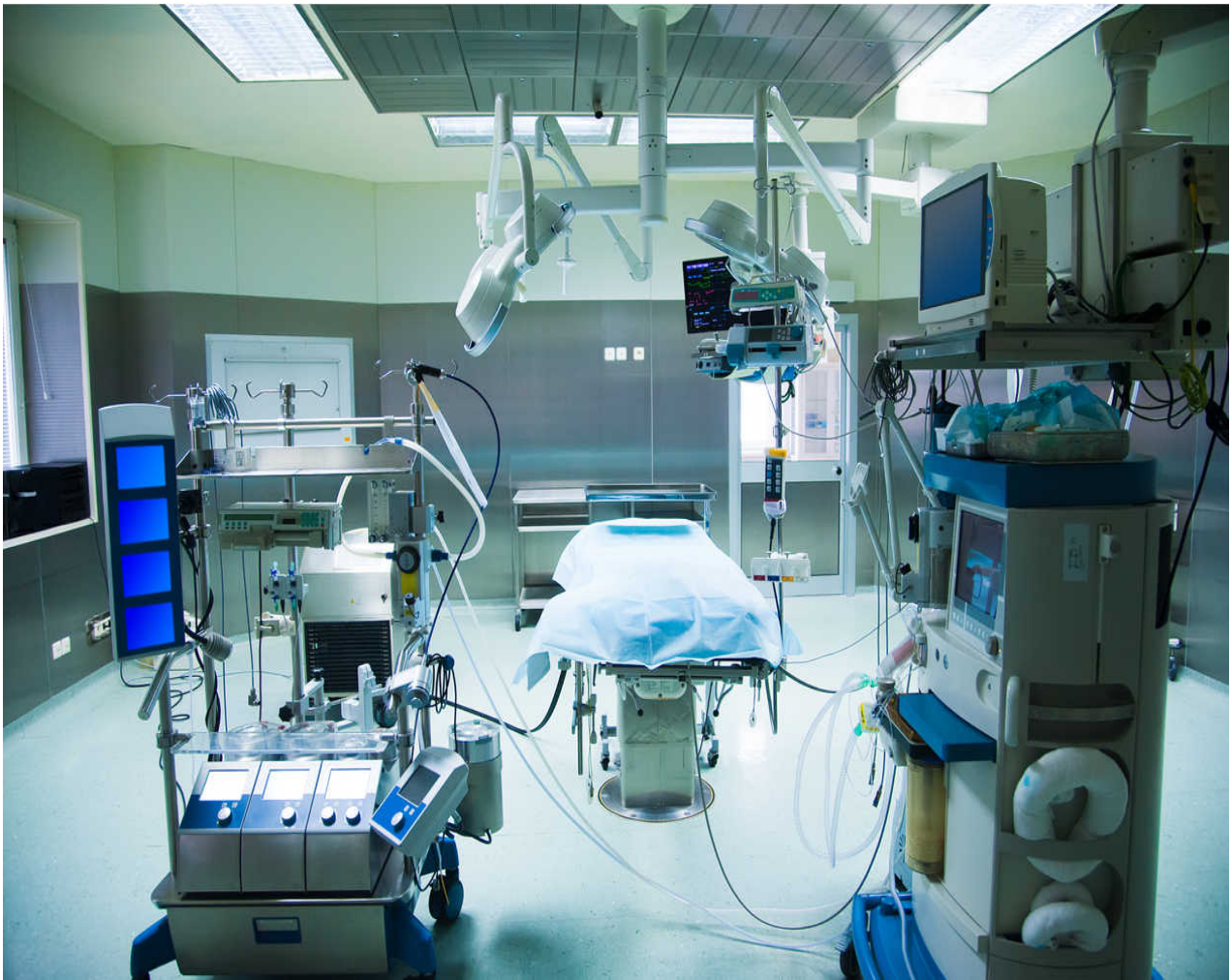


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. of Health Confirms 120th Death Tied to Covid-19 in Territory

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Four days after announcing [the 119th Covid-related death in the USVI](#), the V.I. Dept. of Health on Monday announced the 120th death tied to the coronavirus in the territory, an indication that though the U.S. Virgin Islands has moved into the endemic phase of the virus, its impact continues.

"The deceased is a 77-year-old female on St. Croix," D.O.H. said in a release confirming the 120th death. "The Department of Health extends condolences to the family and friends of our latest COVID-19 related fatality."

As of Monday, there were 178 active cases of Covid-19 in the USVI: 98 on St. Croix, 68 on St. Thomas and 11 on St. John. The territory-wide seven-day positivity rate stood at 10.5 percent, [according to D.O.H.](#)

The health department just under two weeks ago announced the presence of Omicron subvariant BA.4 in the territory, with the department advising that BA.5 may also be present based on preliminary data.

The discovery of BA.4 was confirmed following routine Covid-19 sequencing of 19 samples sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which returned with conclusive results of the BA.4 subvariant. "Preliminary reports also indicate the presence of the BA.5 subvariant, which the V.I. D.O.H. will confirm when conclusive data is available," the department said.

The CDC two weeks ago said that subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 have become the dominant strains of Covid-19 in the U.S., representing 52 percent of all cases. The original Covid-19 vaccines, which were designed to target the original coronavirus strain, have proven to be less effective against the Omicron variant, and U.S. health regulators have directed vaccine producers to modify their vaccines to better target the latest strains.

"As we move into the fall and winter, it is critical that we have safe and effective vaccine boosters that can provide protection against circulating and emerging variants to prevent the most severe consequences of Covid-19," said Peter Marks, director of the FDA division overseeing vaccines.

"Variants are expected to circulate while Covid remains endemic," said Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion, "I ask that you continue to practice healthy behaviors and remain cautious in public spaces to prevent exposure and transmission. Vaccines are the most powerful preventative tool that is available to us. I urge the public to remain vigilant, isolate and test when feeling ill, and stay up to date with vaccinations by getting boosters when eligible."