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Dept. of Health Suspends Covid Testing Hotline Service as Federal Funding Runs Out; Will Re-Establish Once Local Funding Source Identified

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Janeke Simon **March 06, 2023**

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The V.I. Department of Health's Covid-19 testing and hotline services have been discontinued until further notice.

That's the word from Acting Commissioner Reuben Molloy, as he says D.O.H. is transitioning from federal to local funding sources for the program.

In the interim, "the public is encouraged to seek testing from the St. Croix Clinical lab and Community Medical Lab on St. Thomas," he said.

The announcement comes on the heels of Consortium reporting on [the territory's financial debt to Pafford Medical Services](#), which as of last week topped \$34 million for seven months of services.

According to the acting commissioner, the change is due to the impending end of the federally declared health emergency, which means that much of the federal funding previously allocated to the Covid-19 response will no longer be available. Mr. Molloy said D.O.H. will issue a notification to the public when the government testing service and Covid-19 hotline are re-established.

Vaccinations are still available from D.O.H. sites across the territory, however. Mr. Molloy once again noted that bivalent vaccines are still currently the best protection against serious illness and death. “If you have not become boosted with the bivalent vaccine, you are not protected against the latest Covid-19 variants,” Mr. Molloy reiterated at Monday’s press briefing from Government House.

Meanwhile, February’s Covid-19 wave continues to recede. As of Monday, there were 25 active cases territory-wide: 11 on St. Croix, 12 on St. Thomas, and 2 on St. John. None of these patients have required hospitalization.

Despite the falling numbers, Mr. Molloy reminded the public to remain vigilant about personal protective practices, including maintaining requisite hygiene protocols and physical distancing when around people not of your immediate family.