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Carnival Attendees Reminded to Stay Mindful Amid Low Covid-19 Cases in USVI

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Governor Albert Bryan waves Moko Jumbies during the 2019 St. Thomas Carnival. By. REEMY-REEMZ PHOTOGRAPHY/VICONSORTIUM

The V.I. Department of Health announced today that the number of active Covid-19 cases in the territory remains low, with only seven reported cases and a positivity rate of 2.4 percent.

According to the latest report, all seven active cases are located on St. Croix, while St. Thomas and St. John report zero active cases. Territory-wide hospitalizations have reached a total of two, with one patient at the Juan F. Luis Hospital on St. Croix and another at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

Despite the record low Covid-19 numbers, the V.I. Dept. of Health is urging the community to continue following health guidelines to prevent further spread of the virus. Health Commissioner Encarnacion specifically addressed the upcoming carnival activities, encouraging attendees to remain mindful of the ongoing presence of the virus and to continue adhering to health guidelines to protect themselves and their families.

D.O.H. said it continues to offer free flu and Covid vaccines to individuals aged six months or older, while supplies last. For information about vaccine locations and times, individuals can contact the Health Department offices on 340-718-1311 on St. Croix, 340-774-7477 for adults on St. Thomas, and 340-777-8804 ext. 2600 for children on St. Thomas. On St. John, visit the V.I. Port Authority Gravel Lot, on Wednesdays, between 1 and 4 pm.

The federal Public Health Emergency for Covid-19, declared under the Public Health Service Act, is set to end on May 11th, 2023. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services believes that the nation can transition out of the emergency phase of the COVID-19 response. Ms. Encarnacion assured the public that certain protections will be extended, including access to Covid-19 countermeasures such as vaccines, tests, and treatments.

Upon the conclusion of the public health emergency, coverage for Covid-19 vaccines, seasonal influenza vaccines, and COVID-19 tests will be extended through December 2024. Federal agreements for Covid-19 countermeasures will also continue through this period. However, some provisions, such as Covid-19 vaccinations by non-traditional providers and routine childhood vaccinations by pharmacists, will no longer be covered once the emergency ends.

Some of the key features that will not change under the amended declaration:

- The amended declaration will not have any immediate impact on COVID-19 vaccines, treatments, and tests currently distributed by the US Government either now or when the COVID-19 Public Health ends on May 11.
- No change to coverage for certain prescribing and dispensing of COVID-19 oral antivirals. Liability immunity will continue to be offered for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy interns dispensing COVID-19 treatments, in accordance with a U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorization, such as the oral antiviral treatments Paxlovid and Lagevrio.
- No change to the “Test to Treat” program. Pharmacists and other providers prescribing tests in the “Test to Treat” program will continue to receive liability protection.