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FDA Amendments Simplify Covid-19 Vaccine Schedule, V.I. Department of Health Updates Public

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The V.I. Department of Health has informed the public about the recent amendments made by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to its Emergency Use Authorizations for the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines. These changes are aimed at simplifying the vaccination schedule for most individuals, authorizing the use of the current bivalent vaccines for all doses administered to individuals aged 6 months and older.

Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis highlighted during the Government House press briefing on Monday that the monovalent Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccines are no longer authorized for use in the United States. The FDA believes that simplifying the use of mRNA bivalent Covid-19 vaccines will encourage future vaccination as most of the U.S. population now has antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 from either vaccination or infection.

Dr. Ellis reiterated the importance of staying current with vaccination, including the bivalent Covid-19 vaccines, as they continue to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

The department reported that for the third consecutive week, active Covid cases remain in single digits, with a positivity rate of 1.7 percent. There are currently six active cases territory-wide and one hospitalization.

As the global community observes World Immunization Week, the V.I. Department of Health is participating in this year's campaign, "The Big Catch-up," which aims to return to pre-pandemic vaccination levels and prevent outbreaks from accelerating.

In anticipation of Carnival 2023, the department urged everyone to celebrate responsibly, emphasizing the importance of vaccination and adherence to health guidelines. During the festivities, the department's Communicable Diseases team will offer free HIV/STD testing and prophylactics as part of its "3-4-0 Getting to Zero" campaign.

Elsewhere, D.O.H. said it is preparing for Mental Health Awareness Month in May, with various activities planned to support mental wellness.