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Covid Positivity Rate Up Post-Carnival; Department of Health Focusing on Tracking, Supporting Long Covid as Pandemic Emergency Ends

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As the federal emergency measures instituted following the outbreak of the global Covid-19 pandemic come to an end this week, the V.I. Department of Health is focusing on the long-term impacts of the virus on public health.

“The Department will be tracking cases of long-Covid in the territory,” said Assistant DOH Commissioner Ruben Molloy during the weekly Government House press briefing on Monday. As recommendations are developed to deal with this complex syndrome about which little is yet known, the department said it will be providing support.

People who experience ongoing symptoms following a Covid-19 infections are urged to alert their primary healthcare provider. “Please report this to your doctor,” Mr. Molloy requested. He noted that the territory was still experiencing a post-Carnival elevation of Covid numbers. Active cases stood at 50 as of Monday (44 STT, 6 STX, 0 STJ), with 3 people hospitalized on St. Thomas. “Our positivity rate is up at 11.5 percent,” said the assistant commissioner.

In the face of still-elevated and persistent public sentiment against the idea of vaccinations against Covid-19, health officials still counsel that being fully vaccinated and boosted with the bivalent booster shots available on the market is an individual’s best protection against the coronavirus and its complications, including long-Covid.

Mental Health Awareness month, observed in May, is of particular significance this year, according to Mr. Molloy, because of the profound impact the pandemic has had on the mental health of people across the territory, the country and the world.

Under the theme “Changing the Narrative”, the department will run an online series called “Mindfulness Mondays”, Mr. Molloy announced. The episodes, which focus on mental wellness, will stream at 6 pm every Monday in May, on the Department of Health’s [Facebook page](#). The first episode, which aired on May 8, reviewed signs and symptoms of suicidal ideation, and examined the department’s role in helping people who are in emotional pain.

Nursing Week, which began Monday, was also noted by Mr. Molloy, who expressed his gratitude to all those in the profession.