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Department of Health Offering Vaccine That Protects Against Newest Strains of COVID-19

New bivalent vaccine formulation is more effective against newest variants of virus and is available for those who qualify for booster vaccinations

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — During Tuesday's Government House Weekly Briefing, Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis announced that the Virgin Islands Department of Health (DOH) now has doses of a new COVID-19 vaccine that is more effective against the newest strains of the virus.

"The new formulation of the COVID-19 vaccine, the bivalent vaccine, which is more effective against the newest variants is now available at DOH clinics. We currently have 800 doses available in the territory (600 Pfizer and 200 Moderna)," Dr. Ellis said. "Private providers are requesting their inventory as well. Anyone 12 and up for the Pfizer and 18 and up for Moderna qualifies to receive this new formulation if it has been at least two months since your primary vaccine series. Alternatively, if you currently qualify for a booster, you can receive this bivalent vaccine as that booster."

The DOH's current COVID-19 vaccine schedule is that all vaccinations will take place as a regular part of the Department of Health's clinic schedules. For a COVID-19 vaccination appointment, call 340-244-0016.

Community Business Forum
The Office of the Governor, in partnership with Royal Caribbean Cruise Line and the Department of Tourism, is holding its fifth USVI Community Business Forum to prepare for the upcoming cruising season from 9 to 11 a.m., on Thursday, September 8, at the University of the Virgin Islands' Great Hall, on St. Croix.

Earlier this year, the cruise industry announced plans to increase port calls to island of St. Croix in the upcoming cruising season, and the forum gives the business community an opportunity to engage directly with Administration officials and cruise experts so that they can plan for the upcoming season.

Speakers include representatives from Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, from the Departments of Tourism; the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation; the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce; and the University of the Virgin Islands,' School of Business.

Governor Bryan is encouraging all businesses, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders – shop owners, taxi drivers and food establishments owners — to join the conversation and to share their ideas.

For more information and to register for the free forum, visit www.vi.gov/cbf.

Tropical weather outlook
Director Daryl Jaschen said the center of Tropical Storm Earl is about 370 miles north of St. Thomas

"The NOAA Hurricane Hunters are out and indicate the maximum sustained winds are 65 mph with higher gusts. Earl is forecast to maintain its strength today followed by intensification by tomorrow," Director Jaschen said. "Earl is moving toward the north, away from the Territory at 5 mph, and this motion is expected to continue, with a gradual turn to the north, northeast, starting on Wednesday."

There are no watches or warnings for the U.S. Virgin Islands regarding TS Earl at this time, Director Jaschen said.

The National Hurricane Center and VITEMA are tracking two new disturbances.

The first shows disorganized showers and thunderstorms persisting from the Cabo Verde Islands southwestward several hundred miles in association with a broad area of low pressure. Environmental conditions are conducive for some development of this system, and a tropical depression could form in a few days while moving westward to west-northwestward at 15 to 20 mph over the eastern and central tropical Atlantic.

The second disturbance, located along the African Coast, is a tropical wave currently over western Africa that is forecast to emerge offshore into the eastern Atlantic in a day or two. Environmental conditions appear generally conducive for some slow development thereafter as the system moves west-northwestward over the eastern tropical Atlantic.

For up-to-date weather information and advisories, as well as tips for hurricane preparedness, visit vitema.vi.gov.

Monkeypox
Dr. Ellis said the Department of Health is pleased to report that the Territory still has no confirmed cases of Monkeypox to date.

DOH has embarked on a territory-wide Monkeypox education campaign with specific sessions provided to the medical providers.

"There are approximately 850 doses of the JYNNEOS vaccine available, and we encourage anyone interested to learn more about getting vaccinated by calling: 340-774-9000, ext. 4663," Dr. Ellis said. "The Department has either scheduled or administered 55 vaccine doses thus far."

For more information about monkeypox, use the "Communicable Disease" tab on the Department of Health website at doh.vi.gov. To learn more about being eligible for a monkeypox vaccination, call 340-774-9000 ext. 4663.

COVID-19 cases as of September 6

- Currently tracking 203 active cases (116 STX; 86 STT; 1 STJ)
- There are 5 COVID-19 patients hospitalized at Luis Hospital on St. Croix.
- There are 4 COVID-19 patients hospitalized at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

COVID-19 Testing

The schedule is as follows:
St. Croix – Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the Charles Harwood Memorial parking lot
St. Thomas – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday – 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Schneider Regional Medical Center loading dock
St. John – Wednesday from noon to 3 p.m.

More COVID-19 Information

Anyone who thinks they may have contracted COVID-19 can call the Epidemiology hotline at 340-712-6299 (STX) or 340-776-1519 (STT-STJ). For more information, visit covid19usvi.com.

The Bryan-Roach Administration is investing in the Territory's people, infrastructure and future through transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in the government and ensuring that recovery projects are completed as quickly as possible. Visit transparency.vi.gov

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