GOVERNMENT HOUSE
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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# Department of Health Tracking Omicron Variants BA.4, BA.5

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — During the weekly Government House briefing on Tuesday, July 5, Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion said the department has confirmed the Omicron variant BA.4 and has preliminary findings of the presence of the BA.5 variant.

“We expect that this variant, like all subvariants, will eventually circulate in the community as COVID-19 remains endemic,” Commissioner Encarnacion said. “Therefore we ask all residents to remain vigilant by continuing to practice healthy behaviors in public spaces, where exposure and transmission is more likely to occur.”

**Passing of Governor Turnbull**
Director Motta also reiterated the condolences on behalf of Governor Albert Bryan Jr. on the passing of former Governor Dr. Charles W. Turnbull.

“I join the entire Virgin Islands community in extending our most heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of the late former governor, the Honorable Dr. Charles W. Turnbull, who transitioned this past weekend in Washington, D.C.,” Director Motta said.

On Sunday, Governor Bryan ordered a period of mourning for 30 days, until August 2, during which time all Virgin Islands flags will fly at half-staff.

In a statement issued Sunday, Governor Bryan noted Governor Turnbull’s many accomplishments and contributions to the Territory.

"Governor Turnbull was a true pillar in our community. Outside his legacy as our sixth-elected Governor, he was a historian, culture-bearer, and educator. No words can overstate the significance of his contributions to our territory," Governor Bryan said. "He was a giant, not only in stature, but in what he gave through his life's work to our people's educational and political advancement. I am blessed to have stood on his shoulders and received his encouragement and tutelage."

**GVI Fellows Program**
Director Motta also reminded the community that the deadline to apply for the GVI Financial Fellows' program was extended to July 15.

The GVI Financial Fellows' program is a two-year paid internship open to Virgin Islanders with a bachelor's degree or higher in project management, economics, business administration, construction management, accounting, engineering, finance, and more can work for two years on 6-month rotations within the Government of the Virgin Island's financial and project management agencies, including the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Finance, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and Office of Disaster Recovery.

Those interested in applying for the program can get more information and sign up at dopusvi.org.

**COVID-19 cases as of July 5**

- 8.72% seven-day positivity rate
- Currently tracking 163 active cases (119 STX; 32 STT; 12 STJ)
- 439,813 tested
- 418,818 tested negative
- 20,995 tested positive
- 118 deaths
- There are no COVID-19 patients hospitalized at Luis Hospital on St. Croix.
- There are 2 COVID-19 patients hospitalized, with one on a ventilator, at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

**Infant Vaccinations Approved**
For children 6 months to 4 years old, the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine has been authorized as a three-dose primary series, and for children ages 5-17, the vaccine continues to be authorized as a two-dose primary series. The Moderna vaccine also is authorized for children ages 6 months to 5 years old as a two-dose primary series.

The Health Department is setting venues and schedules for administering infant vaccines, and parents can set up an appointment by calling 340-777-8804 ext. 2600 or going to covid19usvi.com/vaccines

Pediatric vaccines are available:
St. Croix – At the CVC at the Charles Harwood Complex from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays.
St. Thomas – At the Maternal and Child Health Clinic from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays.
St. John – At the Port Authority gravel lot from 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays.

Residents are reminded to bring an ID for the parent or guardian, as well as the infant or child's ID and a copy of the birth certificate.

**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.

For information about the COVID-19 vaccines or to schedule an appointment to get vaccinated, call the VITEMA hotline Mondays-Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 340-777-VACS (8227).

**Home testing**
Positive test results from a home COVID-19 test should be confirmed, and confirmation is absolutely necessary if medical therapeutic treatment with an oral antiviral or monoclonal antibodies is to be prescribed.

Confirmation testing can be arranged by calling the COVID-19 hotline at 340-712-6299 on St. Croix or 340-776-1519 on St. Thomas. The hotline is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, and testing appointments can be made online at http://www.Covid19USVI.com/testing.

**Free Vaccinations**
The Community Vaccination Center (CVC) at Schneider Hospital on St. Thomas will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and on Wednesdays on St. John at the V.I. Port Authority gravel lot.

Free vaccinations at the CVC at the Charles Harwood Complex on St. Croix are available by appointment, which can be made by calling 340-777-8227 or by going to http://www.covid19usvi.com/vaccines. Walk-ins also are available.

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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