



**GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES**

VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

ST. CROIX OFFICE
3500 ESTATE RICHMOND
CHRISTIANSTED, ST. CROIX, U.S.V.I. 00820-4370
CHARLES HARWOOD MEMORIAL COMPLEX
TEL: (340)718-6551 * FAX: (340)718-1376

ST. THOMAS OFFICE
1303 HOSPITAL GROUND, SUITE 10
CHARLOTTE AMALIE
ST. THOMAS, U.S.V.I. 00802-6722
TEL: (340)774-0117 * FAX: (340)774-4001

PRESS RELEASE

April 7, 2022

Ginny Dargan
Ginny.Dargan@doh.vi.gov

**V.I. Department of Health Advises the Public of
the Presence of the Omicron BA.2 Variant in the Territory**

US Virgin Islands — The VI Department of Health (VIDOH) has received confirmation that seven (7) cases of the COVID-19 Omicron subvariant BA.2 have been identified in the territory. There were five (5) cases identified on St. Croix and two (2) on St. Thomas.

The results received today come from samples that were sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for sequencing two weeks ago. “These results represent cases that were positive almost two weeks ago,” states Tai Hunte-Ceasar, M.D., Territorial Medical Director Virgin Islands Department of Health, “This means that the Omicron variant has been in the V.I. for a while and it should be expected that future sequencing will identify additional BA.2 cases.” The national prevalence of this subvariant is 72% of all COVID-19 cases with the remaining percentage representing the original Omicron variant.

The confirmed presence of the latest variant should be a clear signal for all Virgin Islanders to increase their vigilance by closely following the guidance related to wearing masks, hand washing or sanitizing, social distancing, and testing. “Testing is strongly encouraged for everyone who has been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and especially for those who are experiencing symptoms,” reminds Dr. Esther Ellis.

If you suspect you have COVID-19 please call the COVID19 Hotline at (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519 for information on scheduling a test. The Hotline is open Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Testing is also available on St. John every Wednesday from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the VI Port Authority (VIPA) Gravel Lot.

Continued on Page 2

Press Release

V.I. Department of Health Advises the Public of the Presence of the Omicron BA.2 Variant in the Territory

April 7, 2022

Page 2

If you have a medical emergency, call 911. For more information, visit covid19usvi.com. For COVID19 updates, text COVID19USVI to 888777.

Persons who have not yet received a vaccine or booster may still do so at:

- St. Croix's Community Vaccination Center is located at Charles Harwood Memorial Complex. Monday through Friday, 1pm-4pm.
- On St. Thomas the Community Vaccination Center is located at the Community Health Clinic on the 2nd floor at the Schneider Regional Medical Center. Monday through Friday, 8am-4pm
- Vaccines and boosters continue to be available for individuals of all ages on St. John at the pop up in the Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) Gravel Lot on Wednesdays between 1:00 p.m. and 4 p.m. Testing is also done at this same site between 12:00 p.m. and 3 p.m.
- Parents seeking pediatric vaccines for their children aged 5 to 11 on St. Thomas can obtain vaccines at the Maternal, Child Health Clinic in the Elanco Building on Tuesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Appointments are strongly encouraged and can be made by calling (340) 777-8227. Parents or guardians need to bring identification for themselves and the child as well as the child's birth certificate.

“Unfortunately, we at the VIDOH have felt that finding the Omicron BA.2 variant in our community was not a question of ‘if’ but rather ‘when,” continued Hunte-Cesar, “Nationally the prevalence for the variant is remarkably high, so it was expected that the V.I. would eventually begin to see cases. Nevertheless, Virgin Islanders should take all precautions to protect themselves from becoming infected with the virus.”

###