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PRESS RELEASE

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VIDOH Urges the Public to Continue Adhering to COVID-19 Safety Practices During Upcoming Public Events

US Virgin Islands — The VI Department of Health (VIDOH) is continuing to advise the public on the importance of practicing COVID-19 preventive measures.

Dr. Tai Hunte-Ceasar reminds the community that we are entering into a state of endemicity where COVID-19 will continuously be prevalent throughout the territory and COVID levels will rise depending on the level of activity and variants circulating among the community.

"Our current positivity rate is 15 percent. However, we are seeing a lower level of sickness in our hospitalized patients," said Dr. Tai Hunte-Ceasar. "We began our transition out of the pandemic into endemicity with the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions. So, let's continue to work together and keep each other safe by doing our part."

The VIDOH urges everyone to become proactive about their personal health as well as the health and well-being of your loved ones.

During this transition period with increased activities, we will continue to balance our efforts to vaccinate as many as possible and reduce transmission. With the much-needed relaxed restrictions come larger functions. Prevention remains the best way to reduce the risk of long-term complications of COVID infection, known as long COVID, or death.

Recommended Precautions:

- Get vaccinated and boosted – and encourage your loved ones to do the same. This is the most effective tool that protects against severe infection or death.
- Make good choices by wearing a mask while indoors and in crowded outdoor areas.

- Maintain at least a 4-foot social distance from people who are not in your household. If social distancing is not possible wear a properly fitted mask indoors when in public spaces and outdoors in crowded spaces.
- Wash your hands often or sanitize them when you cannot.
- If you are sick, stay home.
- If you have tested positive, stay home for 5 days whether you are fully vaccinated or unvaccinated. If, after 5 days you are fever-free for 24 hours without taking fever reducing medication or your symptoms are improving, you may leave your home.
- If you have COVID-like symptoms, stay home. Even if you test negative.
- If you are in close contact with someone with COVID-19, and you are **<u>NOT up-to-date</u>** on your COVID-19 vaccines, stay home for 5 days and get tested. You can still transmit the virus before testing positive.
- If you are **<u>up-to-date</u>** on your vaccines (Vaccine doses 1&2 and Boosters 1&2) there is no need to quarantine if you have no symptoms. If you have symptoms, stay home and get tested.
- No Quarantine is necessary for persons who were exposed and had a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the past 90 days (per a viral test) and you have no symptoms. Test on day 5 and watch for symptoms until day 10. If you have symptoms, stay home and get tested.

If you are high risk or are close to someone who is considered high risk for COVID-19, do not attend crowded events. If you suspect you have COVID-19 please call the COVID-19 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. If you have a medical emergency, call 911. For more information, visit covid19usvi.com. For COVID19 updates, text COVID19USVI to 888777.

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