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MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY  
ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Chief Medical Officer, Chair  
Health Services Subcommittee  
National Emergency Committee

*Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines*

**MU VARIANT  
&  
FOUR (4) NEW COVID-19 CASES**

The World Health Organization (WHO) on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, named the variant B.1.621 - Mu, a variant of interest. A variant of interest (VOI) is one that has genetic differences to the other known variants and is causing infections in multiple countries, and therefore *might* present a particular threat to public health. A VOI is not a variant of concern (VOC), which is a variant that has been proven to be either more transmissible, cause severe disease or is able to escape the immune response making it more dangerous and so more consequential.

Mu is the fifth “variant of interest” to be monitored by WHO since March 2020. The WHO weekly COVID-19 bulletin states that this variant of interest “has a constellation of mutations” that may make it less susceptible to vaccines and immunity from natural infections. Research and further monitoring will be done to better understand the characteristics of this variant of interest.

On review of sequencing results for samples sent from St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the COVID-19 IMPACT Project Lab through the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), five (5) cases of the Mu variant were detected between July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. All cases were detected within the community as contacts of other positive cases and from persons seeking healthcare.

Four (4) new cases were reported from thirty-six (36) samples processed on Monday September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, resulting in a positivity rate of 11.1%.

Five (5) new recoveries were noted over the reporting period. Sixty-five (65) cases are currently active and twelve (12) persons with COVID-19 have died. Two thousand three hundred and eighty-nine (2389) cases of COVID-19 and two thousand, three hundred and twelve (2312) recoveries have been recorded in St. Vincent and The Grenadines since March 2020.

In view of the confirmed presence of the Mu variant of interest in the community and the increased risk of infection and subsequent transmission of COVID-19 posed by the growing incidence of variants of concern in persons entering St. Vincent and the Grenadines, strict compliance with all protocols and recommendations is strongly recommended. These include the effective use of masks, physical distancing, hand sanitizing and immunization with available vaccines.

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