GOVERNMENT HOUSE
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
June 1, 2021
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# Government House Urges Residents to Prepare for Hurricane Season

*Health Department Reminds Virgin Islanders Approval is Required for Parties, Gatherings Outside the Scope of Governor Bryan's Executive Orders*

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — During the Government House weekly press briefing on Monday, Government House Communications Director Richard Motta Jr. urged residents to visit the VITEMA website and begin assembling hurricane kits for the upcoming 2021 storm season.

"On behalf of Governor Bryan and Lt. Governor Roach, I am encouraging all Virgin Islands to have a Hurricane Preparedness Supply kit that includes batteries, first aid supplies, non-perishable foods, water and copies of your important documentation," Director Motta said. "Make sure you build a kit, make a plan and sign up for our VITEMA Alerts to get the most up-to-date information. For suggestions on what you should have in your hurricane preparedness kit and helpful tips on how to make your home hurricane-ready, visit vitema.vi.gov."

Residents also can sign up for AlertsVI and access a 2021 Hurricane Tracking Map at the same website.

Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis also advised residents that the Department of Health is seeing new positive cases of COVID-19 related to parties and other gatherings, and she reminded the public that approval is required to hold special events outside of what is allowed through the Executive Orders.

Event organizers and promoters wanting to hold an event outside of the scope of Governor Bryan's Executive Orders need approval from the Department of Health, Division of Environmental Health.

"To request to hold an event, party, or function, a 'Special Events Request Form' must be submitted to inspections.deh@doh.vi.gov at least 14 days before the event," Dr. Ellis said. "The form is available through email and at the Department of Health offices on St. Thomas and St. Croix. The form can also be found online at doh.vi.gov/programs/environmental-health."

In addition to the "Special Events Request Form," all promotional materials must be shared with the Department of Environmental Health at inspections.deh@doh.vi.gov before public distribution.

Between May 21 and May 27, there were 121 new positives for the week: 101 on St. Thomas; 14 on St. Croix; and 6 on St. John. The majority of these were among persons assistance ranging in age from 18 to 49 who are unvaccinated, are students or minors,  worked in accommodation and food services; or public administration, healthcare or social.

**FY 2022 Executive Budget**
Governor Bryan on Friday submitted the first-ever two-year executive budget to the 34th Legislature and Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory. The two-year executive budget represents a balanced budget and was submitted on time as with the governor's previous two budget proposals.

Some of the Governor's two-year executive budget highlights include:

- $110 million for the payment of tax refunds
- $38 million for repayment of the 8% salary cut because of the Virgin Islands Economic Stability Act of 2011
- Funding to fill more than 1,200 vacant government positions in the upcoming fiscal year
- A 4% wage increase for government employees in the upcoming fiscal year, followed by a 3% wage increase in Fiscal Year 2023
- $15 million to be placed in the Rainy-Day Fund across both fiscal years
- $12 million over 2 years for the expanded Workforce Development Program at the Department of Labor
- Funding for the creation of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and the Office of Health Information Exchange

"The benefits of presenting the Executive Budget in a biennial budget format for the first time include more time being spent on the management, oversight, and implementation of the various spending programs," Director Motta said. "We believe that this budget provides a strong blueprint for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 amidst the ever-changing demands brought to the forefront by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic."

**Stimulus payments**
Because of the COVID-related closure at the Bureau of Internal Revenue Office in St. Thomas, the Bryan-Roach Administration was delayed getting out the latest batch of stimulus payments to Virgin Islands residents last week.

However, the Department of Finance has reported that those 9,000 checks totaling $17.5 million will be mailed out this Thursday, June 3rd.

Residents who have questions about their stimulus payment or income tax return, can contact the Bureau of Internal Revenue's Hotline at 340-714-9325, and the agency's offices in Sunny Isles on St. Croix and in Red Hook on St. Thomas are open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Vaccinations administered**

- 40,694 first doses (51.3% of the population)
- 32,522 persons fully vaccinated (41.0% of the population)

Anyone 12 and up is eligible to receive the vaccine. Please make sure to have a parent or guardian accompany any minor wishing to get vaccinated, and bring an ID for both the minor and the parent or guardian.

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

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

**Pop-Up testing sites**

This week, pop-up testing sites will be at the following locations:

- **The V.I. Port Authority Gravel Yard** on St. John on Wednesday, June 2, from 1 to 4 p.m.
- **Home Depot** on St. Croix on Thursday, June 3, time from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- **Fort Christian Parking Lot** on St. Thomas on Thursday, June 3, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Residents can pre-register for testing online at www.covid19usvi.com/testing.

**COVID-19 cases as of May 29**

- 3.8% positivity rate
- Currently tracking 127 active cases (11 STX; 107 STT; 9 STJ).
- 115,336 individuals tested to date.
- 111,861 of those tests were negative.
- 3,475 tests came back positive.
- 3,249 people have recovered.
- 28 fatalities.
- No COVID-19 patients are hospitalized at Juan F. Luis Medical Center on St. Croix.
- Four COVID-19 patients, none on ventilators, currently are hospitalized at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

The Bryan-Roach Administration is committed to transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in the government and ensuring the disaster recovery is completed as quickly as possible.

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