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Acting Governor Roach Modifies COVID-19 Restrictions As Cases Continue Climbing Among Unvaccinated Virgin Islanders

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – As active COVID-19 cases continue increasing among unvaccinated Virgin Islanders in the Territory, Acting Governor Tregenza A. Roach, Esq. issued an executive order modifying a number of restrictions in place in an effort to stop the spread of the disease.

Among the changes in Acting Governor Roach's new executive order, which go into effect on Friday, August 13:

- Beaches will go back to closing at 4 p.m. on weekends and holidays
- The limit on mass gatherings is reduced from 100 persons to a maximum of 50 persons and the Virgin Islands Department of Health may approve events up to 100 persons if they are all vaccinated. (ALL gatherings or events of less than 50 persons still need approval from the Department of Health.)
- The Positive Antibody test will no longer be an option for the travel portal, and persons arriving to the Territory will need to show proof of vaccination received in the USVI or provide a negative PCR or antigen test taken within 5 days of their date of travel. (**NOTE:** Travelers arriving from the British Virgin Islands are required to present test results taken within 2 days of their arrival.)

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has repeatedly said: "The best and fastest way to stifle this current outbreak affecting unvaccinated Virgin Islanders is for all the residents of the Territory to get vaccinated, but I will do whatever it takes, within the confines of the law, to protect the health and well-being of the Virgin Islands public."

Acting Governor Roach also said that virtual learning will remain in effect in the schools until at least September 7, and that he is considering further measures, such as paring down the number of Government of the Virgin Islands offices that will remain open and mandating automatic one-month closure of establishments found to be non-compliant with COVID-protocols.

As of Friday, August 6, the Virgin Islands Health Department is tracking more than 325 active cases of COVID-19 in the Territory; there have been 40 fatalities attributed to the virus; and 29 people currently are hospitalized for COVID, with 4 of 18 patients on a ventilator at Luis Hospital on St. Croix and 4 of 11 patients on a ventilator at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

"While much of the current outbreak is being attributed to the Delta variant, the large number of residents who will not get vaccinated increases the possibility of the virus continuing to mutate, possibly into even more lethal variants," Governor Bryan said. "As the data clearly shows, both here and across the United States, this second

wave of infections and deaths is almost exclusively affecting people who aren't vaccinated and the only way to stop this rampant spread of COVID is for those people to take the vaccine."

A copy of Acting Governor Roach's 27th Supplemental Executive Order, as well as all executive orders since the State of Emergency went into effect in March 2020, is available at the Government House website at http://www.vi.gov/executive-orders/

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