GOVERNMENT HOUSE
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Governor Bryan Re-Evaluating In-Person Learning At Public Schools as Surge of COVID-19 Cases Continues

21 People, Including 9-year-old, Hospitalized as Department of Health Monitors More than 200 Active Cases Across the U.S. Virgin Islands

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — During the weekly Government House briefing on Monday, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. said he is re-evaluating in-person learning at the Territory's public schools, which are scheduled to reopen on August 9, and that some pandemic restrictions may have to be re-implemented as the U.S. Virgin Islands deals with an ongoing surge in COVID-19 cases.

The Governor also emphasized that the segment of the local population most vulnerable to the highly contagious and more deadly Delta variant strain of COVID-19 are those who are not vaccinated.

"None of the individuals currently fighting for their lives, none of the individuals currently fighting for their lives against this virus or the 35 people who have unfortunately lost their lives were vaccinated," Governor Bryan said.

The Governor opened the weekly briefing by announcing that the Department of Sports Parks and Recreation has suspended all of its programs and facility rentals for at least two weeks during the increase in cases of the virus. The Governor also said the Department of Health has reached out to its medical procurement contractor in an effort to bolster the resources to battle the COVID surge.

"Virgin Islanders, we are approaching the point of reimposing restriction as we currently have 208 active cases. There is no question that we are experiencing another surge," Governor Bryan said. "We have requested temporary support and additional resources from Pafford to help supplement our limited manpower while we go through this surge."

The Governor also reiterated his plea for non-vaccinated Virgin Islanders to get the vaccine and for all residents to follow the safety and health protocols, such as wearing masks, social distancing and avoiding mass gatherings, that have helped the Territory mitigate the spread of the virus.

"We need everyone to heed the request to be extremely cautious over the next couple of weeks and to really hold it down. If we can get the numbers trending in the right direction again, we will be alright," Governor Bryan said. "No, it's not the cruise ships; it's not the planes. While it would be convenient for me to point the finger at those as the culprit, unfortunately, it's us. It is those of us who don't want to wear our masks, those of us who insist on hosting and attending mass gatherings, and those of us who have not yet gone out to get the vaccine."

Digital Vaccination Records
Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion said that beginning Wednesday, July 28, the department's Digital Vaccination Records will be used to facilitate re-entry to the Territory via the travel portal.

The Digital Vaccination Records can be carried as a wallet-sized card that also is storable on a smart phone.

To request your Digital Vaccination Records, go to covid19usvi.com/digitalpass.

Vaccination Lottery winners
The winners for the July 16 drawings for $100,000 in the Vax-to-Win Lottery are

- Aretha McFarlande on St. Croix
- Xingbin Yun of St. Thomas, who is accepting the prize on behalf of his daughter Rena, who is a Virgin Islander attending college in Florida.

Retiree Retro Pay
Last week, the Bryan-Roach Administration paid out $10 million owed to government employee retirees who were owed money from a collective bargain unit covering the years 1990-2001.

Eligible recipients received a check of $1,700 – minus applicable taxes – if they were owed that amount or more, and eligible retirees owed less than $1,700 received checks for the difference.

The Division of Personnel has launched a web portal where individuals that were affected by the 8% pay cut can log in to see the amount owed to them, and the Bryan-Roach Administration anticipates making those payouts between now and the end of this year.

The website is at www.dopusvi.org/retirees, and retirees who do not have access to the internet can call a retro hotline for access to the same information or to ask any questions at 340-714-5010.

Payments may also be claimed by surviving family upon the death of a retiree. To check if a payment is owed, survivors can also visit dopusvi.org/retirees, download and fill out the W-9 form and affidavit and email both documents back comp2021@vi.gov.

Vaccinations administered

- 43,856 persons have received a first dose (49.06% of eligible population)
- 37,005 persons fully vaccinated (41.4% of eligible 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 must 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:

- Home Depot Parking Lot on St. Thomas on Tuesday, July 27, from 1 to 3 p.m.
- Charles Harwood Complex on St. Croix on Tuesday, July 27, from 10 a.m. to noon.
- The V.I. Port Authority Gravel Yard on St. John on Wednesday, July 28, from 1 to 4 p.m.
- Charles Harwood Complex on St. Croix on Thursday, July 29, from 10 a.m. to noon.
- Lionel Roberts Stadium on St. Thomas on Thursday, July 29, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Residents can pre-register for testing online at www.covid19usvi.com/testing and free vaccines are available at the pop-up testing sites.

COVID-19 cases as of July 24

- 4.82% positivity rate
- Currently tracking 208 active cases (61 STX; 141 STT; 6 STJ).
- 141,518 individuals tested to date.
- 137,143 of those tests were negative.
- 4,375 tests came back positive.
- 4,132 have recovered.
- 35 fatalities.
- There are 10 COVID-19 patients hospitalized at Juan F. Luis Medical Center on St. Croix.
- There are 11 COVID-19 patients 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 that recovery projects are completed as quickly as possible. Visit transparency.vi.gov

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