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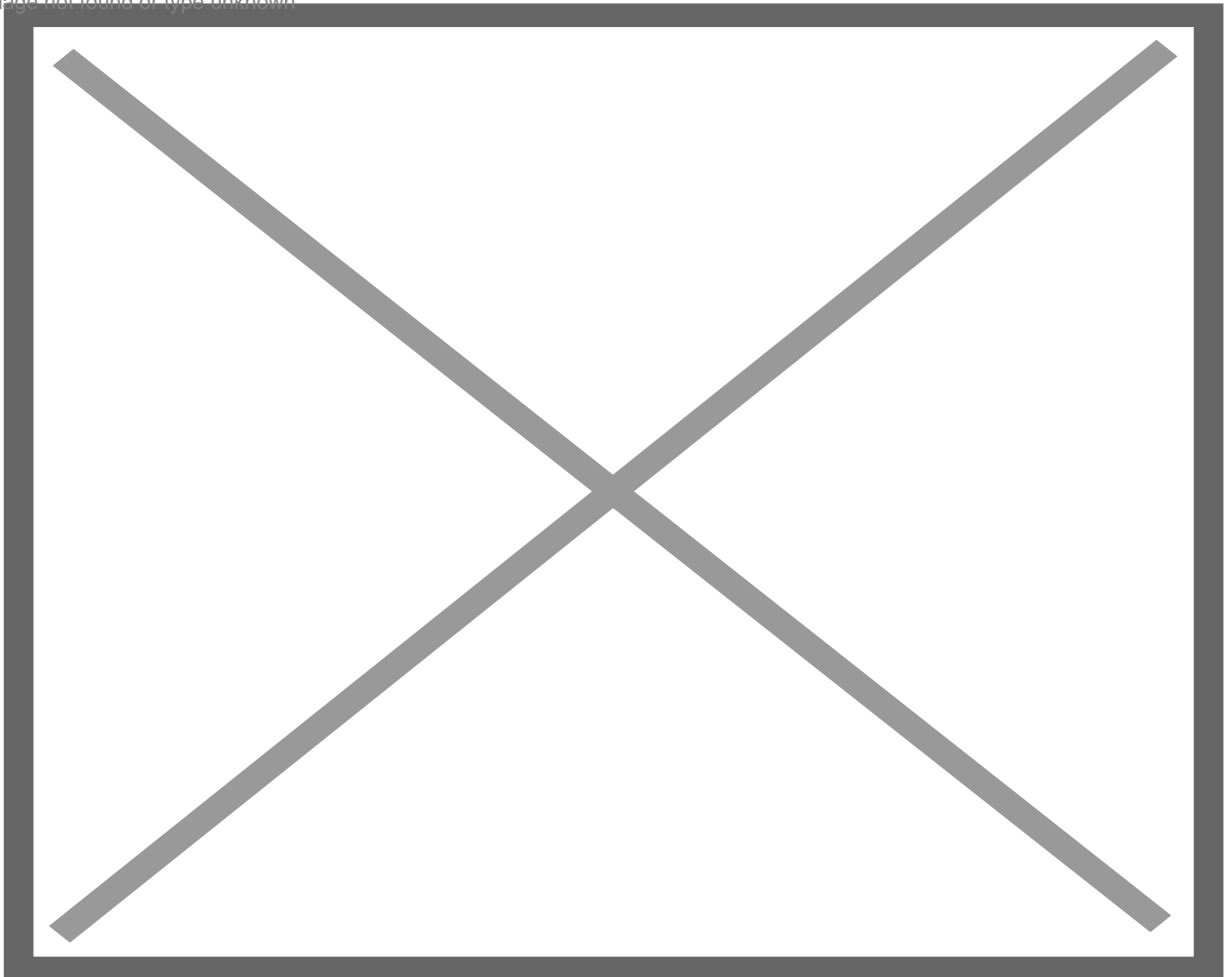
Dengue Cases in USVI Likely Underreported as Residents Avoid Medical Treatment, Says Chief Medical Officer

Chief Medical Officer Tai Hunte-Ceasar highlights the challenge of assessing the true dengue burden in the territory, urging residents to seek medical diagnosis for accurate tracking

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Public health officials are having difficulty in assessing the scope of the dengue surge in the territory, due to the reluctance of many Virgin Islanders to seek formal diagnoses and medical treatment for their ailments.

“The numbers of cases are far higher than” the 89 confirmed cases of dengue that have been recorded in the territory thus far, said Chief Medical Officer Tai Hunte-Ceasar during Monday’s

Government House press briefing. “People do not always seek care, allowing for testing and accurate diagnosing,” she noted.

“Our true dengue burden is unknown, and we are encouraging residents to get tested for dengue if you do have symptoms,” Dr. Hunte-Cesar urged the populace. “It is crucial to see your doctor and get tested to confirm whether you have dengue or another illness. This is the only way we can accurately track the rate of dengue in our community.”?

She reminded residents to be on the lookout for fever, pain in the joints, bones, and muscles, nausea, vomiting, rash, and a headache most commonly experienced behind the eyes. Symptoms can range in intensity from mild to severe, and can be life-threatening in some patients.?

Amidst the spike in cases, Dr. Hunte-Cesar cautioned residents to take proactive steps in mitigating the spread of disease by keeping mosquitoes at bay. Eliminating breeding areas around the house, and reducing the risk of being bitten are strategies that should be employed by all Virgin Islanders, the chief medical officer said – from draining standing water to wearing clothing that covers the body, to utilizing the appropriate insect repellent.

She noted that the recently launched [public health dashboard](#) provides weekly updates on both dengue and covid-19 prevalence in the territory.