

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Confirmed Coronavirus Cases Jump on St. Croix to 27 With 3 Patients Hospitalized; Total Confirmed Cases Now 66

Coronavirus / **Published On April 30, 2020 05:36 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **April 30, 2020**



Juan F. Luis Hospital F. Luis Hospital Sign Board By. ERNICE GILBERT/ VI CONSORTIUM

Just as Governor Albert Bryan [moves to start reopening](#) the territory's economy by allowing almost all non-essential businesses to operate in some capacity, confirmed cases of the coronavirus, particularly on St. Croix, suddenly jumped from 23 on Tuesday to 27 on Wednesday, representing all of the territory's 4 new cases confirmed by the Department of Health Wednesday evening.

In fact going all the way back to April 17 to present, St. Croix has seen all but 1 of the total new confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to data provided by the Dept. of Health.

It remains to be seen whether Mr. Bryan will revise his phased reopening plan in light of the new cases on St. Croix. During his press briefing on Wednesday, the governor said the territory had three hospitalized cases of the coronavirus at the Juan F. Luis Hospital, and that 7 people were being tracked. However, before the day was over, the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency sent out its latest coronavirus alert revealing that positive cases had jumped to 66, with 51 persons recovered and four who have died. This means the Bryan administration is now tracking 11 positive Covid-19 cases as the territory goes into a phase that could increase the disease's spread.

To help minimize the contagion's transmission in the USVI as non-essential businesses are allowed to reopen beginning Monday, the governor has ordered the mandatory use of face masks when entering a business to all individuals except those two years and under, and those with acute respiratory illnesses.

Even so, enforcement of the new rules will be key in the territory's fight to stave off a surge in new cases. To that end, Mr. Bryan said police officers will be randomly visiting a number of establishments to ensure enforcement. He also said residents should be responsible for themselves. "People always ask how do you enforce it. Well the people enforce it. Do you feel comfortable going into a hairdresser, a barber, a salon where people don't have mask on? Where they use clippers on somebody else that are not properly sanitized? Do you feel safe going into places where people don't have masks and they're preparing open food?"

A breakdown of the numbers as of Wednesday, April 29 is as follows:

- St. Thomas: 37 confirmed cases
- St. Croix: 27 confirmed cases
- St. John: 2 confirmed cases
- Pending cases: 43
- Total confirmed cases: 66
- Total Recovered: 51
- Cases being tracked: 11
- Total tests performed: 916
- Total negative results: 807
- Total deaths: 4

So far four people have died from the pathogen in the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to health officials. The latest was a 67-year-old woman on St. Croix who died at her home and tested positive for Covid-19 postmortem.

A recommendation by health experts and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the reopening of an economy has been tied to the capability to mass test. Dr. Esther Ellis, territorial epidemiologist at the V.I. Dept. of Health, said Wednesday that CDC guidelines also say if positivity rate is 10 percent or lower, enough testing is being

done.

"Right now our positivity rate is 7 percent. That means only 7 percent of everyone we test actually test positive," Dr. Ellis said. "That's really great. That shows that we are testing the net wide, we're catching mostly negatives, and the positives that we're catching are quarantined and safely protecting themselves away from others so others aren't" contracting the disease.

On mass laboratory testing, the epidemiologist said, "We are on track within the next week to be able to test up to a thousand samples a day." Dr. Ellis said the test that will be utilized for mass testing is the same test that detects the actual presence of the virus.