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Dept. of Health Shuts Down Popular Bar/Nightclub and Asks Patrons Who Visited Within Last 14 Days to Call Hotline

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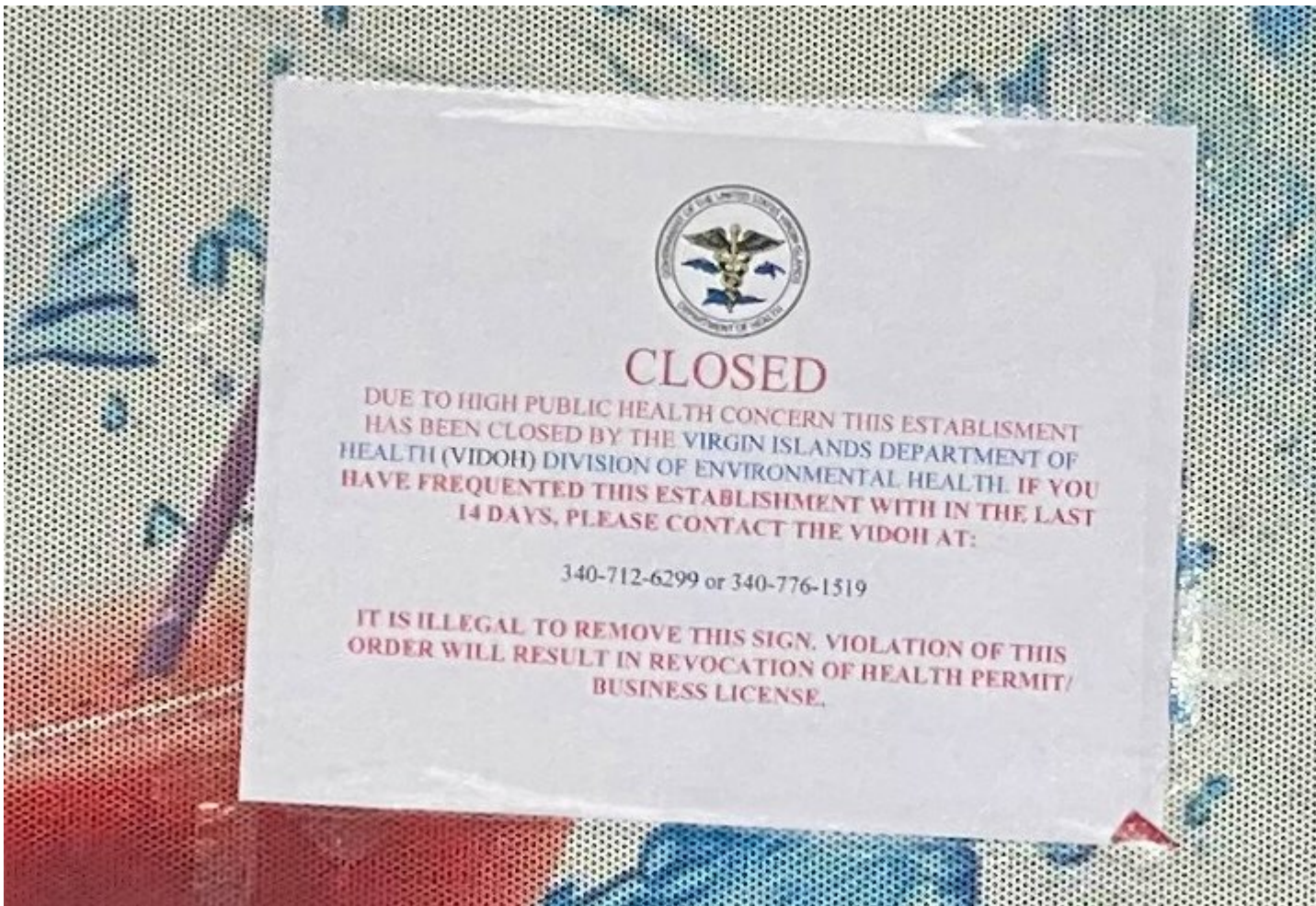
Sign posted on the entrance doors of Hangova Daiquiris last week. By. VI CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — The Virgin Islands Department of Health last week shut down "Hangovah Daiquiris", a popular nightspot on St. Croix located in the United Shopping Plaza that has garnered buzz for its unique daiquiri drinks.

A sign posted on the establishment's door, reads, "Due to high public health concern this establishment has been closed by the Virgin Islands Department of Health, Division of Environmental Health." The sign goes on to ask patrons who visited the establishment within the

last 14 days — the time individuals who were exposed to the novel coronavirus are said to develop symptoms, called the incubation period — to contact the department.

D.O.H. also warned establishment owners not to remove the sign on the door, a violation of which could lead to revocation of health permit or business license — or both.



(Sign posted on entrance doors of the "Hangova Daiquiris" by the Dept. of Health last week. Credit: VI Consortium)

The closure has caused concern within the St. Croix community of possible spread of Covid-19. Requests for comment from Dept. of Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion were not returned at time of writing.

There have been several reports that spread of the virus at nightclubs have fueled a resurgence in some countries. According to NPR, on May 10, South Korea, one of the few countries that [managed to control the virus, reported 34 new coronavirus infections](#) — at the time its highest daily tally in about a month, following an outbreak tied to several nightclubs and bars. In Charlotte, North Carolina, a spike in cases [was linked to nightclubs](#).

In the U.S. Virgin Islands, Governor Albert Bryan [has greenlighted live entertainment](#) at nightclubs, bars and restaurants. Dept. of Licensing and Consumer Affairs Commissioner, Richard Evangelista, said patrons to nightclubs are required to wear masks, but that rule is seldom adhered to or enforced.

The territory has seen an increase in coronavirus cases in the past two weeks, some from community transmission, meaning, "We do not know where the last two individuals got it from,"

said Dr. Esther Ellis, D.O.H.'s territorial epidemiologist, while other cases were related to travel.

On June 1, the Bryan administration reopened the territory to leisure travelers, and the V.I. Port Authority has reported a steady stream of booked flights to the USVI since that time.

D.O.H. urged residents to wear masks, as has been ordered by Governor Albert Bryan, when entering establishments. Ms. Encarnacion said the department has been receiving reports of no masks or individuals wearing masks without covering the nose or mouth. "The practice should stop as it could put you at risk and also make it dangerous for others," the commissioner said.

She later added, "I think it's safe to say that being at home is still your safest option and we're not in the clear yet."

Ms. Encarnacion said while D.O.H. believes its screening process at the territory's airports is effective, she indicated that people with coronavirus could still go undetected. Dept. of Health's Dr. Tai Camille Hunte-Cesar, explained that, "There is an incubation period associated with having the infection. Regardless of what type of measures we put in place at airports, negative screening at the airport process does not guarantee that persons entering the territory will in fact be negative for the remainder of their stay in the territory."

Dr. Hunte-Cesar added, "The incubation period is up to 14 days, so as we put in any strategy to be done at the airport, a negative screen does not mean that persons will not turn positive within the next 14 days of their stay."

D.O.H. encouraged individuals to monitor themselves for symptoms, and to self-report.