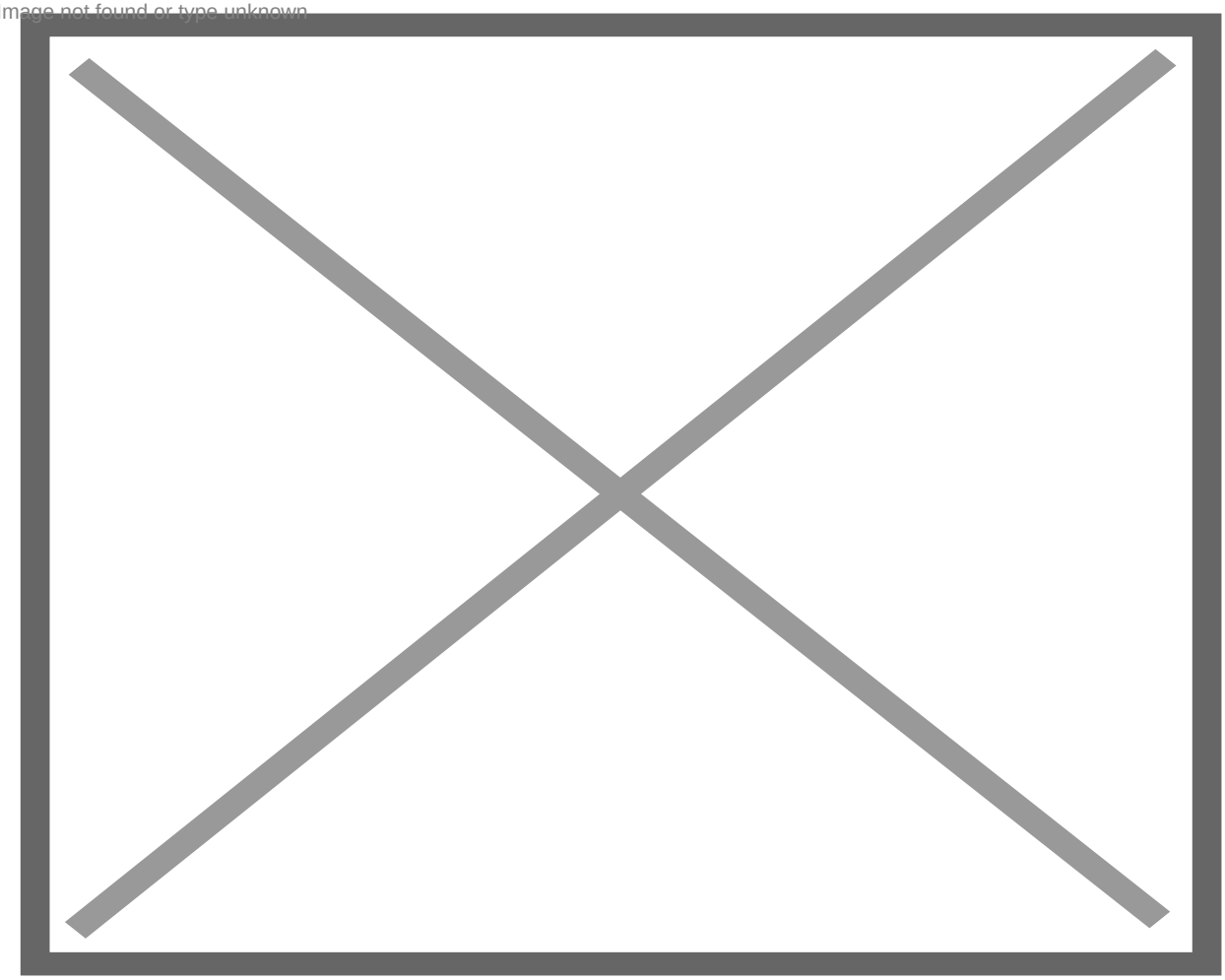
logo Image not found or type unknown

Two Additional Cases of Coronavirus Confirmed on St. Croix as Bryan Contemplates Shutting Down Bars

Coronavirus / **Published On June 24, 2020 06:22 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert June 24, 2020

Image not found or type unknown



Cases of the novel coronavirus continue on an upward trend after a lull in confirmed cases in the territory. Following the reopening of the islands to leisure travelers, there has been a steady increase of the deadly pathogen in the USVI, including two new cases confirmed by the V.I. Dept. of Health on Tuesday.

Now, health officials are tracking 8 cases of the virus in the territory, at least 5 of which are on St. Croix.

One of the two new cases is travel-related, according to the Dept. of Health's info graphic. Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion told the Consortium that contact tracing was in progress. For the other case, health officials are in the process of determining how it was transmitted.

As of Tuesday, 2,706 tests had been administered, of which 2,593 returned negative and 78 positive. Six people have died of the virus in the territory and 64 have recovered, according to health officials.

Governor Albert Bryan said Monday that his administration was considering shutting down bars in an effort to slow the recent rise in confirmed cases in the territory.

"Right now the bar is one of the targets we're looking at and really contemplating if we need to shutdown bars and just have restaurants open, because that seems to be where the spread is coming from," the governor said Monday during his Covid-19 press briefing. "People don't wear their masks and it goes without saying that alcohol lowers your inhibitions; you start getting touchy-feely, hugging people, and that doesn't work with Covid."

Asked what it would take to walk back the reopening from "Open Doors" to the "Safer at Home" phase, Mr. Bryan said, "I think it would take people showing up at the hospital, showing that we have a surge for us to be identifying cases and where they are being identified coming from community spread. That would be the ticker."

The territory's main travel hub is Florida, with no less than six routes to the U.S. Virgin Islands daily via a number of carriers, according to a Dept. of Tourism official. This is significant because Florida in recent times has been one of the states with the most Covid-19 cases, confirming 3,289 cases on Tuesday as the state shot past the 100,000 confirmed cases mark.

There were at least 64 new coronavirus-related deaths reported Tuesday across the state, including 18 in Miami-Dade County, four in Broward and eight in Palm Beach County.

In the past day, Miami-Dade County’s confirmed cases increased by 583 to 26,822. The county has 902 deaths, the highest total in the state.

Broward’s cases increased by 417 to 11,744. The county’s death toll rose to 377.

Palm Beach County’s cases increased by 237 to 11,180, with the death toll at 476.

Monroe County now has 166 cases (an increase of one overnight) and four confirmed deaths, according to Local 10.

Even so, Governor Bryan on Monday downplayed the connection of Covid-19 cases in the territory to tourists.

"I really like the national push to keep people vigilant and keep people nervous," he said. "Florida, Texas, California and New York are the four most populated states in America so of course their numbers are going to be getting high. But I'd like to remind everybody [that] the majority of this stuff that we have is our own residents moving back and forth, coming for funerals, coming home for trips. This is how we're getting infected; not tourists."

© Viconsortium 2025