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States are Requiring 14-Day Quarantine or Face Penalties. Will the USVI Follow Suit?

Coronavirus / **Published On June 29, 2020 06:31 AM /**

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As cases of the coronavirus continue to surge in the U.S., at least three states are now requiring that visitors quarantine for 14 days or face penalties: New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

In the U.S. Virgin Islands, where on paper there is a mandatory 14-day quarantine for those coming into the territory, it is not enforced unless individuals show symptoms. This means asymptomatic individuals, or those who may have been recently infected but not yet showing signs of infection, could easily come into the territory and spread the virus.

And the 14-day quarantine order all but became null and void when the Bryan administration announced its "Open Doors" phase, which made room for leisure travelers to visit the USVI. Tourists would be turned off from coming to spend their leisure time in the USVI if they had to be

quarantined for a mandatory 14 days even if they showed no symptoms of the virus.

But with coronavirus cases surging in the US, state leaders are taking action to curb the spread by either walking back reopening plans, or holding off on further easing of restrictions.

"We have to make sure the virus doesn't come in on a plane," said New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to CNN.

"We worked very hard to get the viral transmission rate down, and we don't want to see it go up," he added.

As of Wednesday, the joint advisory from the three states applied to Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah and Texas — all states where coronavirus cases have surged recently.

According to CNN, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut will be responsible for their own enforcement of the quarantine. The states' health commissioners will pursue an aggressive public relations campaign at airports, highways and other locations, the news network said.

In New York, Mr. Cuomo said those violating the quarantine could be subject to a judicial order and mandatory quarantine, and fines are \$2,000 for the first violation, \$5,000 for the second violation, and \$10,000 if you cause harm.

The largest hub for travel to the USVI is Florida, where cases have surged fivefold in the last two weeks. On Saturday, for the second straight day, Florida surged past its previous record for new coronavirus cases, reporting 9,585 infections. Another 8,530 were reported on Sunday.

Back in the territory, Governor Albert Bryan [has said](#) it would be difficult to enforce the 14-day quarantine. "We're no different than any other state in terms of our penalties for violating the stay-at-home order or violating a 14-day quarantine," he said. "The problem comes in tracking. I would like you to put forth evidence that anyone of those places who've actually arrested anybody for violating a 14-day quarantine. It's a civil rights issue. I mean how do you arrest somebody that you think may be sick? They, just like us are asking people to comply with the 14-day quarantine."

Hawaii, the U.S. state that is located outside North America, and the only island state, has been arresting people for breaking the 14-day quarantine for a while now. Just Friday, Hawaiian law enforcement [arrested a man from Maine](#) for violating the 14-day quarantine order.

Mr. Bryan will update the territory today on his administration's plan as cases of the virus surge in the USVI. Last week, the governor said he was contemplating closing bars, because, "That seems to be where the spread is coming from," he said.

Mr. Bryan added, "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."

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