

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Coronavirus Affects Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged; D.H.S. Says it's Taking Precautionary Measures

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ST. CROIX — The Department of Human Services has been calling family members of residents of the Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged to inform them that the coronavirus has impacted the assisted living facility, according to family members who spoke with the Consortium.

Herbert Grigg is the latest of a number of government-run facilities to be impacted by the virus. Recently, the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands in the St. Thomas-St. John District, informed its employees that the virus had infiltrated the judiciary, according to a memo viewed by the Consortium.

Other facilities impacted include the V.I. Dept. of Health, the Youth Rehabilitation Center on St. Croix, and the Election System of the Virgin Islands, among others.

D.H.S. on Friday night provided a statement to the Consortium regarding steps it had taken to minimize the virus's impact at its senior centers.

"The additional exposure to COVID has become greater, with the rising number of positive cases on the island. Therefore, the Department of Human Services is working closely with the Department of Health to provide testing for and monitor all of our Homes for the Aged residents and staff (Herbert Grigg – STX and Queen Louise – STT)," the department said in a statement.

It also listed a number of protocols put in place. D.H.S. said the protocols were put in place in March, and that D.H.S. Commissioner Kimberly Causey-Gomez met with family members on March 17.

The new protocols for assisted living facilities in the territory run by the government are as follows:

- The screening protocol, including temperature checks for all persons attempting to enter the facility will continue.
- The Department of Health's Division of Epidemiology tested employees and residents of the Herbert Grigg Home this past week and is scheduling the same for Queen Louise Home for the Aged
- Modified shift schedules for coverage of the facility has been implemented.
- We will reassess and revise the shift schedules for coverage of the facility when COVID results are received.
- Plans are in place for the HGH facility to be professionally sanitized, including fogging and cleaning of all areas in the nursing and resident rooms.
- Meetings with staff will continue in order to address concerns and reiterate facility protocol and safety precautions outlined by CDC and the Department of Health.
- Employees were reminded of the following pre-cautions mandated by the VI Department of Health and provided to them in mind March. Employees must wear mask for face coverings

In the U.S., deaths of staff and residents at senior-care centers represent at least 40 percent of overall Covid-19 fatalities, according to the Wall Street Journal. The next highest rate is Ireland, with a 62 percent share.

At least 57,000 residents and workers have died from the coronavirus at nursing homes and other long-term care facilities for older adults in the United States, according to a New York Times database. As of July 15, the virus had infected more than 316,000 people at some 14,000 facilities.

According to the Times, Covid-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, is known to be particularly lethal to adults in their 60s and older who have underlying health conditions. And it can spread more easily through congregate facilities, where many people live in a

confined environment and workers move from room to room.

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