

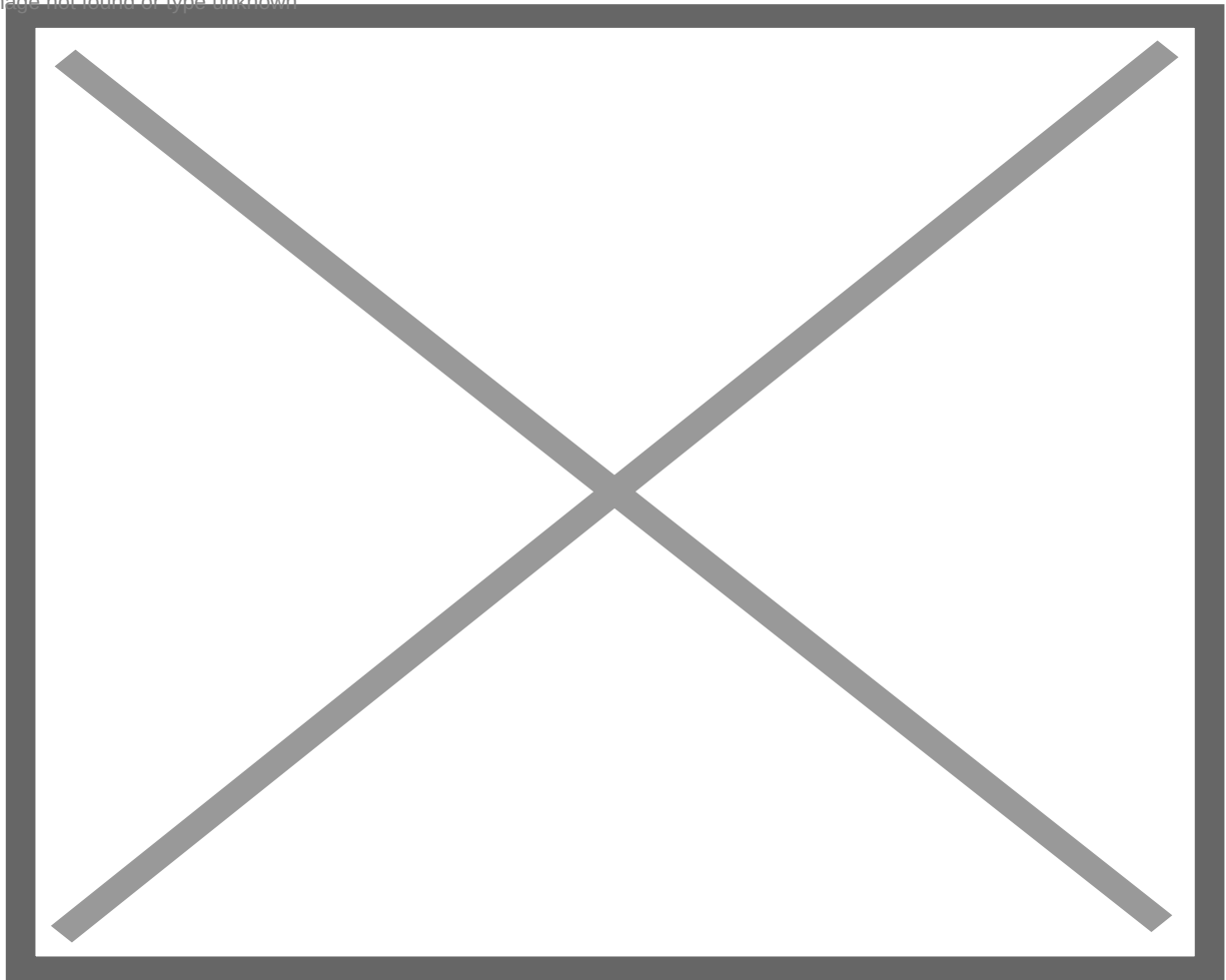
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25 New Covid-19 Cases Reported Over the Weekend as Bryan Considers New Dining and Beach Restrictions (Update)

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Last updated at 11:03 a.m. (The governor's press briefing today will take place at 2:00 p.m. instead of 1:00 p.m., as was previously reported.)

Governor Albert Bryan has been considering new dining and beach restrictions that could help curtail the spread of the coronavirus in the U.S. Virgin Islands, as cases continue to rise in the territory and the dreaded community spread means of transmitting the disease becomes even more difficult to contain.

Between Friday and Saturday, the Department of Health reported 25 new cases of the virus: 6 on Friday and 19 on Saturday. The department reported zero new cases on Sunday, but that's a result

of a low number of tests, 5, being performed — moving the total number of people tested from 10,900 to 10,905 between Saturday and Sunday.

In a release issued Friday, Mr. Bryan sought to quell talk in the community that new restrictions were imminent. The governor confirmed that he and members of the administration's Covid-19 Task Force on Thursday met with tourism industry stakeholders, signaling possible future actions.

"However, that meeting and those conversations were intended to serve as a courtesy, and the actions mentioned during that meeting are contingent on the data received over the coming days," Government House said Thursday.

The administration said Mr. Bryan and his Covid-19 task force would continue to closely monitor the virus's spread, which will inform the decision-making process in the coming days. The governor is scheduled to hold a briefing today at 2:00 p.m.

Of the 19 cases [reported Saturday](#), 18 were on St. Thomas and 1 on St. John. There were no reported cases on St. Croix in D.O.H.'s Saturday report. The Friday report of 6 cases saw 1 on St. Croix and 5 on St. Thomas. St. Thomas saw 7 cases of community spread over the weekend, while 12 cases were under investigation, meaning D.O.H. was still attempting to determine the means through which the virus had spread from one person to another.

Governor Bryan has spoken about [a strategy shift](#) that would keep the USVI open while managing the number of Covid-19 cases through successful hospitalization and release of patients. "At the end of the day Albert Bryan makes the decision on whether we're going to open or close. Not anybody else. one man. And I think we've done a great job of being able to keep it open and keep people healthy. Yes we have a lot of cases, but the problem isn't getting the cases, the problem is dying. So we have the facilities and continue to grow our facilities in terms of treating people and making sure that they come out alive," Mr. Bryan said.

Of the new strategy, the governor said, "That shift comes as a result of remember, when we started doing this, we thought we would be done by summer and then we would be okay. The realization that it's not going to end anytime soon — even if we get a vaccine, we still have another year at least — and coronavirus is going to be around for years. So the most important thing now is being able to manage your hospitals and being able to make sure that people stay alive."

But with cases rising and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [placing the USVI on its Level 3 Travel Warning Notice](#), which calls for Americans to avoid non-essential travel to the territory, the governor's new strategy is being put to the test.

On considerations of curtailing beach activity, experts have said the virus spreads more easily at beach bars, where event-goers are in proximity, shouting at each other over loud music and with limited ventilation, according to [the Wall Street Journal](#).

To date, 547 people have tested positive for the virus in the USVI. D.O.H. is currently tracking 128 active cases, while the department lists 410 people as recovered. Nine people have died of the virus in the territory.