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63 New Coronavirus Cases Reported in USVI in Single Day; Surging Outbreak in St. Thomas With 57 of Reported Infections

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The V.I. Department of Health reported 63 new cases of the coronavirus on Tuesday, the highest single-day number of infections reported since the pandemic began.

Of the 63 new cases, St. Thomas — representing a surging outbreak — saw 57 of those cases, according to the Dept. of Health [data](#). The Bureau of Corrections on Tuesday announced that 20 individuals, including inmates and staff members, have tested positive for the virus at the St. Thomas prison facility, named the Alexander A. Farrelly Criminal Complex.

The Dept. of Health listed almost all of the St. Thomas cases — 51 — in the under investigation category, meaning D.O.H. as of Tuesday night was still attempting to determine how

the new cases were transmitted. The six St. Thomas cases that D.O.H. did determine included 5 community spread infections and 1 close contact.

On St. Croix, 5 new cases were reported, 4 of which were close contact and 1 community spread. St. John had 1 new case, which was under investigation as of Tuesday night.

The Dept. of Health is tracking 162 active cases: 139 in St. Thomas and 19 on St. Croix. St. John had 4 active cases as of Tuesday night.

In total, 639 people have tested positive for Covid-19 in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and 9 people have died. According to D.O.H., 11,444 people have been tested for the virus, with 10,778 tests returning negative.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [last week](#) placed a Level 3 Travel Notice warning on the USVI. The advisory warns against non-essential travel to the territory, pointing to a high risk of contracting Covid-19 and limited medical resources to serve those who do fall ill.

Today, New York [added the USVI to the list of states and territories](#) where travelers coming from those locations are required to quarantine for 14 days.

On Monday, the governor — who has kept the territory's lodging reservation system online after [ordering occupancy businesses in March to temporarily stop accepting guests](#) — [said](#) his administration would strictly enforce Covid-19 rules at restaurants in an effort to blunt the spread of the virus. He also announced tougher measures for boaters, limited funeral attendance to 10 family members, and announced a \$50 fine for those found to be violating the No Mask, No Service order.

But the governor backed away from attempting to curtail travel to the USVI, stating such an action was out of his jurisdiction as only the federal government can close the airports. But Mr. Bryan, through powers made available in the state of emergency declaration that the territory is [currently under](#), can order lodging facilities to stop accepting reservation for a period of time, which would discouraging travelers from visiting the USVI during the pandemic.

Mr. 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."

Senator Kurt Vialet called for a new strategy to deal with the outbreak on St. Thomas. "Fifty-seven positive cases on STT today, over one hundred in seven days. We need a different plan for STT to flatten the curve," he [wrote](#). "We are in crisis."

