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Dept. of Health Announces Two Additional Covid-19 Deaths, Bringing Total to 14

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The V.I. Department of Health on Tuesday announced two additional coronavirus-related deaths, bringing the territory's total to 14, four of which occurred in the past week.

"After further investigating cause of death and ensuring notification of next of kin, the Virgin Islands Department of Health is saddened to confirm the territory's thirteenth and fourteenth deaths related to COVID- 19," D.O.H. said in a release Tuesday night. "The deceased are a 95-year old female and a 72-year old male on St. Thomas."

The Consortium has learned that the Queen Louise Home for the Aged has lost 4 residents to Covid-19. The Department of Human Services has not issued a statement on the matter.

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D.O.H. reported 32 new Covid-19 cases Tuesday night: four on St. Croix, 26 in St. Thomas and two in St. John. The department listed 801 individuals as recovered, up from 754 a day earlier for a total of 47 recoveries between Monday and Tuesday. The department was tracking 215 active cases as of Tuesday: 50 on St. Croix, 11 on St. John and 154 in St. Thomas.

The USVI has now passed the 1,000-mark positive cases with a total of 1030 individuals testing positive for the virus as of Tuesday. To date, 15,032 people have been tested territory-wide, with 13,935 returning negative.

Governor Albert Bryan during his Covid-19 response update Monday appeared frustrated when responding to questions posed by the Consortium. Asked how the virus was able to infiltrate the seniors home in St. Thomas. His response: "Covid."

There was a pause, then he added, "In St. Thomas we have coronavirus at a community-spread level where we felt we needed to shutdown. The reason it is called community spread is because you don't know where it's coming from, and the reason why we shut down is because we don't know where it's coming from. We still don't, and we're just trying to get people to stop moving.

"It's not like there weren't protocols in place or anything, it's just... If you have prison guards, nurses, personnel, medical personnel moving from place to place, people coming in, eventually it's going to happen. It's a matter of when, not a matter of if, so all we can do is try our best to keep it to a minimum and then deal with the situation as quickly as possible."

When asked whether there would have been a different outcome to the current surge in cases if stricter action had been taken earlier, the governor responded with sarcasm. "You mean if I had a crystal ball that could have seen what was going to happen...?"

He added, "The only action I think that we have done that's any different is shutting the bars." Reminded that he had halted the lodging reservation system in the territory, which discouraged visitors from traveling here, the governor asserted, "So what you're saying we should have never opened the territory at all; I don't think that's really feasible. We shut down the territory because we want people to stop moving." Mr. Bryan said the only thing that could have been done differently to keep people safe was if the administration had never allowed bars to reopen.