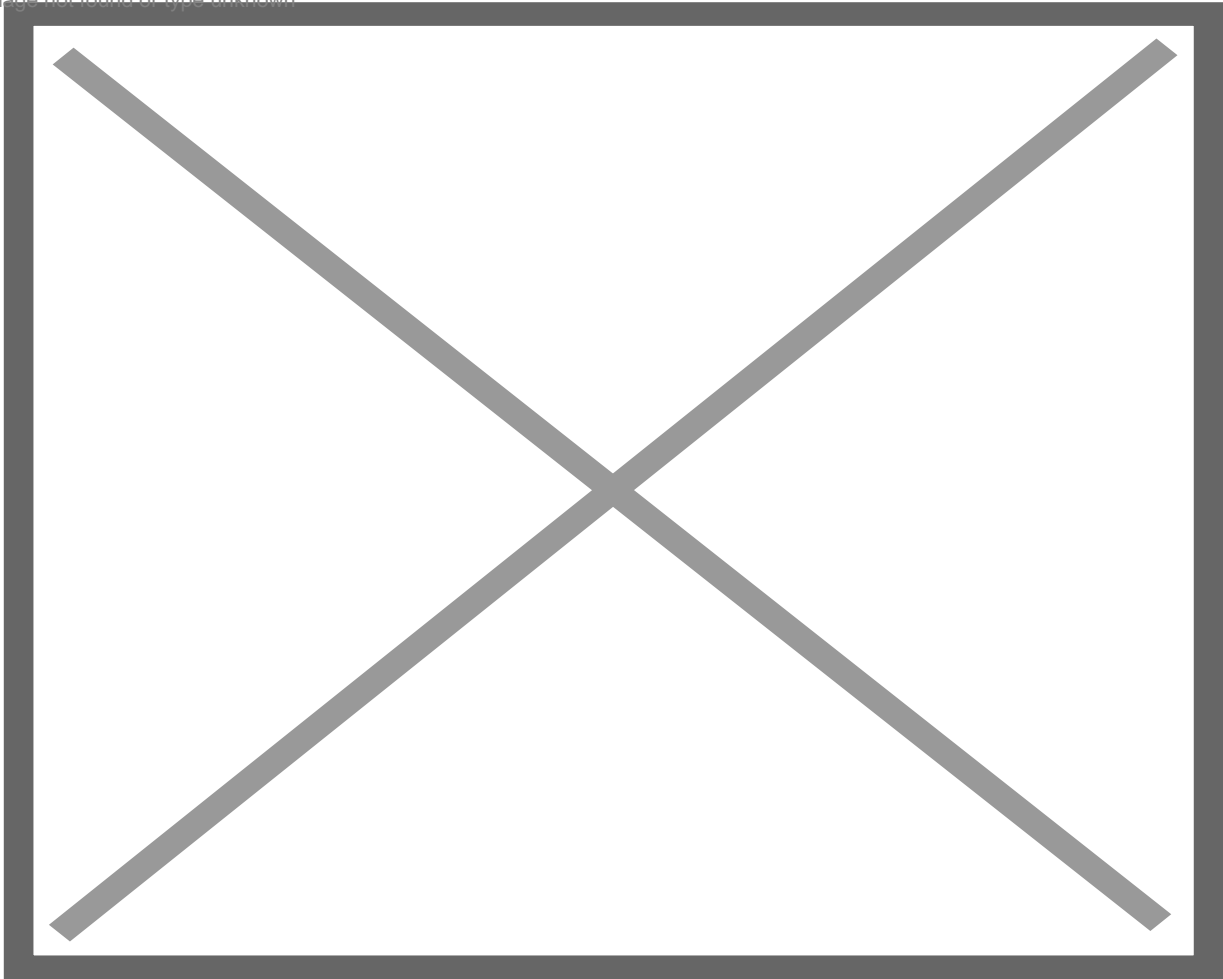


D.O.H. Pushes Back Against Report Deeming USVI Most Likely to Top World With Covid-19 Deaths Per Capita, Saying Data is Unreliable

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The V.I. Department of Health said Sunday it was "significantly concerned that researchers and news sources have published that the mortality rate for COVID-19 in the U.S. Virgin Islands could top the world in per capita pandemic deaths."

D.O.H. pointed out that the predictions made were based on a single Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington's School of Medicine [statistical model](#), which the department said has been frequently criticized. The department further stated that IMHE uses a model that was previously reported to be incorrect 70 percent of the time. The Trump administration has regularly used this model.

"COVID-19 is unpredictable, but these models are also extremely unreliable if used to predict cases or deaths months or even weeks into the future," D.O.H. said. "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends using a combination of models of which there are 14 currently available for the USVI."

"The consensus of those individual model predictions by the CDC have proven more accurate and suggest that the Virgin Islands is now expected to endure one death each week into October," stated the health department. "This is in stark contrast to the single prediction circulated. The Virgin Islands is currently within the lowest 25 percent of states and jurisdictions for mortality per capita for COVID-19. The USVI has suffered 19 deaths for approximately 100,000 persons. In comparison, those states that have endured the worst have COVID-19 deaths rates that total as high as 150-180 per 100,000 persons."

IHME said [in its data release](#) that the U.S. Virgin Islands could wind up with the highest Covid-19 related deaths Per Capita in the world.

"Under the most likely of IHME's scenarios, the nations with the highest per capita total deaths would be the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Netherlands, and Spain," wrote IHME in its report. "By World Health Organization region, this scenario projects 959,685 total deaths by January 1 in the Region of the Americas, 667,811 in the European Region, 79,583 in the African Region, 168,711 in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 738,427 in the South-East Asia Region, and 191,598 in the Western Pacific Region."

"These first-ever worldwide projections by country offer a daunting forecast as well as a roadmap toward relief from COVID-19 that government leaders as well as individuals can follow," said IHME Director Dr. Christopher Murray. "We are facing the prospect of a deadly December, especially in Europe, Central Asia, and the United States. But the science is clear and the evidence irrefutable: mask-wearing, social distancing, and limits to social gatherings are vital to helping prevent transmission of the virus."

D.O.H., in its pushback, said, "It is unfortunate that inaccurate and unreliable information has been frequently circulated nationwide and even here in the territory. We have been providing the public with thorough, accurate, and timely information regarding COVID-19 and our response."