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USVI Joins American Airlines' Preflight Covid-19 Testing Program

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The V.I. government is hopeful that its entry into American Airlines' preflight testing program will strengthen efforts to minimize the spread of Covid-19 in the territory, according to the Dept. of Tourism.

According to the release, Governor Albert Bryan, who the release says recently called for pre-departure testing to make travel to the Caribbean healthier and easier, heralded the territory's inclusion in the "LetsGetChecked" program to give more customers access to at-home PCR testing with observation by a medical professional via a virtual visit.

“Since the beginning of our response to this pandemic more than nine months ago, we have worked overtime to ensure that we do everything we can to protect our residents and visitors.

Throughout our efforts, American Airlines has been one of our major partners and we are thankful that passengers across the U.S. mainland have another option to get tested before traveling to our islands,” said Mr. Bryan, who, according to D.O.T., reported that protecting the lives and livelihoods of Virgin Islanders has always been central to the government’s efforts during the pandemic.

According to the release, during the pandemic, American Airlines has continued operating service to the U.S. Virgin Islands – both St. Thomas (STT) and St. Croix (STX) – and is currently flying more than 50 weekly flights to St. Thomas from its hubs in Charlotte (CLT), Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), Miami (MIA), Chicago (ORD) and Philadelphia (PHL), as well as more than 20 weekly flights to St. Croix (STX) from Charlotte and Miami.

For travel beginning December 9, 2020, passengers traveling from the U.S. to the U.S. Virgin Islands will have access to the testing program. Testing must be completed within five days of departure, according to the release.

“Through this initiative, we continue to demonstrate our commitment to keeping our residents and visitors safe and healthy during the coronavirus pandemic,” said D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte. “This easy-to-use, at-home solution adds another layer of protection, convenience and confidence for those traveling to the Territory, allowing them to focus on their unique reasons for choosing the USVI.”

"LetsGetChecked" is an at-home coronavirus (COVID-19) test that incorporates a nasal swab and PCR lab analysis, offering convenient and secure results on average 48 hours upon receipt in the lab, according to the release.

The release says every traveler aged five or older who enters the U.S. Virgin Islands, by air or sea, including anyone in-transit to another destination, is required to use the USVI Travel Screening Portal and submit a COVID-19 test result prior to travel, to avoid processing delays, enhanced health screening and/or mandatory self-quarantine.