

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Active Cases Climb to 134 in USVI as Surge Continues; Bryan Urges Residents to Forego Holiday Gatherings

Coronavirus / **Published On December 08, 2020 05:12 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **December 08, 2020**



In the last five days, Covid-19 cases have surged in the U.S. Virgin Islands, with the V.I. Dept. of Health reporting 117 new cases within that period. The current total [active caseload stood at 134](#) as of Monday night, with St. Croix accounting for 44, St. Thomas 50, and St. John 40 — the most active cases St. John has had since the onset of the pandemic. Health officials reported 31 new cases in the USVI Monday.

According to D.O.H.'s most recent data, at least four of the current cases were travel-related, while fifteen cases were community spread infections. Seventeen cases were a result of close contact, according to the health department.

Governor Albert Bryan, speaking during his administration's Covid-19 response update Monday, discouraged gatherings and non-essential travel. He said Government House had canceled events already planned in an effort to minimize the spread of the virus.

"There is no mandate to cancel events as yet, but as Government House, we had a number of events scheduled for Christmas, including drive-thrus, we're going to go ahead and cancel our events. We just don't want anybody to have any reason to gather for any reason," he said.

Mr. Bryan said the Government House drive-thru would have seen the distribution of "goodies" while people simply drove through to collect them. "We're going to cancel all of that because we expect to see the numbers increase throughout the week and hopefully by Christmas we start to get a drop in these numbers. But for the foreseeable future, I think that things are going to be progressing in an upward way in terms of the coronavirus," the governor said.

Airport protocols, at least on St. Croix has been lax, with this reporter experiencing a rather weak setup following a recent trip to Puerto Rico. While I was asked to provide a test result, which I did, some passengers of the same flight entering the territory said they had not tested, and were simply allowed to walk out after filling out a document.

Mr. Bryan said Monday the administration would address the situation in the coming weeks, including mandating 100 percent testing at the airports, according to Government House.

"Individuals who come to the territory without a negative test will be mandated to be tested at a personal cost," said Mr. Bryan. "Those who refuse to be tested will be fined and subject to a 14-day quarantine." The governor has spoken about these impending restrictions for a while, but rigid implementation has not taken place.

Mr. Bryan said the fine that will be imposed will be significantly more than the cost of getting a Covid-19 test, according to Government House.

"The only delay to this being implemented is the availability of tests and testing, as well as the software changes needed for a smooth transition to this format," he said. "We were successful in joining the new initiative by American Airlines to provide pre-boarding testing and will continue to pursue this with other airline partners."