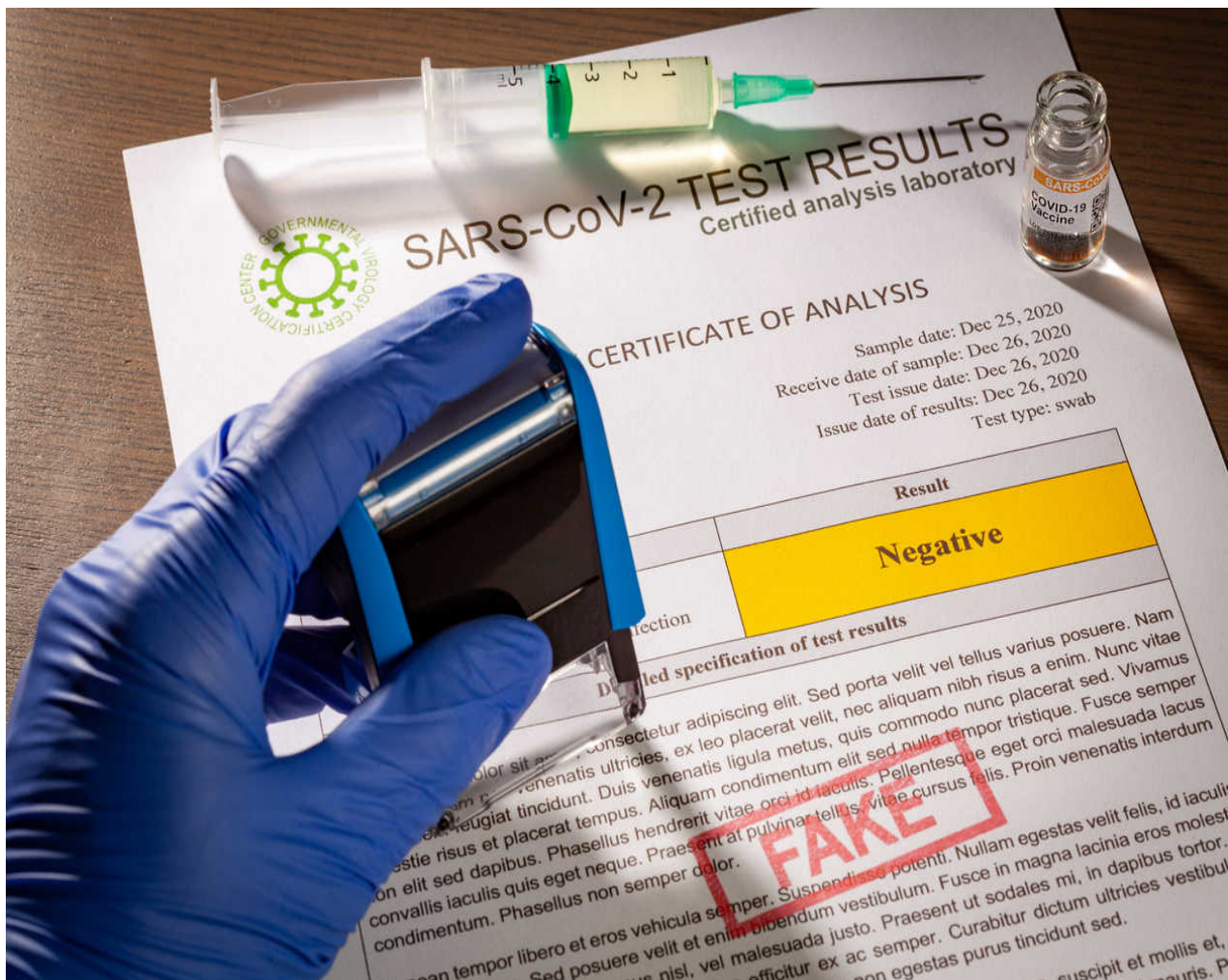


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. of Justice Assails Virgin Islanders for Submitting False Covid Test Results Through Travel Portal, Vows Prosecution

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V.I. Department of Justice Criminal Division chief Eric Chancellor said during the Bryan administration's weekly press briefing that the Office of the Attorney General will start prosecuting persons who submit false Covid-19 test results or forged documents through the Virgin Islands travel portal.

Mr. Chancellor chided primarily Virgin Islanders for the practice and vowed to prosecute those caught.

"It was particularly disturbing to find out that some Virgin Islanders and primarily Virgin Islanders are intentionally putting their fellow residents at risk of infection from a potentially deadly virus," Mr. Chancellor said. "We are the ones who should care most for each other, we are the ones who should be going out of our way to protect each other. There is simply no excuse for this behavior and make no mistake about it, submitting false documents to the Government of the Virgin Islands is criminal behavior."

Mr. Chancellor cited two Virgin Islands statutes that make the behavior illegal. The first, Section 843 of Title 14 of the Virgin Islands Code, which speaks to the illegality of making false and fraudulent statements against the government. "It makes it a crime, in any matter within the jurisdiction of any agency of the Government of the Virgin Islands to knowingly and willfully falsify, conceal or cover-up by any trick, scheme or device a material fact or make any false or fraudulent statement of representation in such matters," Mr. Chancellor stated.

Violators under this section face a fine of up to \$500 and/or two years imprisonment or both, according to the criminal division chief.

Section 795 of Title 14 of the Virgin Islands Code relates to the filing and recording of forged instruments and criminalizes the procurement or offering of any false or fraudulent instruments to be filled or recorded in any public office of the Virgin Islands.

The punishment for committing the latter crime is a fine up to \$1,000 and imprisonment for up to five years.

"Everyone knows that is wrong to make misrepresentations in matters as serious as the Covid virus," he said. "Everyone knows that it is wrong to submit forged or fraudulent documents to the government. The purpose of this policy statement is to put those few who would do those wrongs on notice that their criminal behavior will not and cannot be excused any longer."

As of Monday, the USVI had fifty-four active Covid-19 cases: 24 on St. Croix, 19 on St. Thomas and 9 on St. John, according to the V.I. Dept. of Health.