

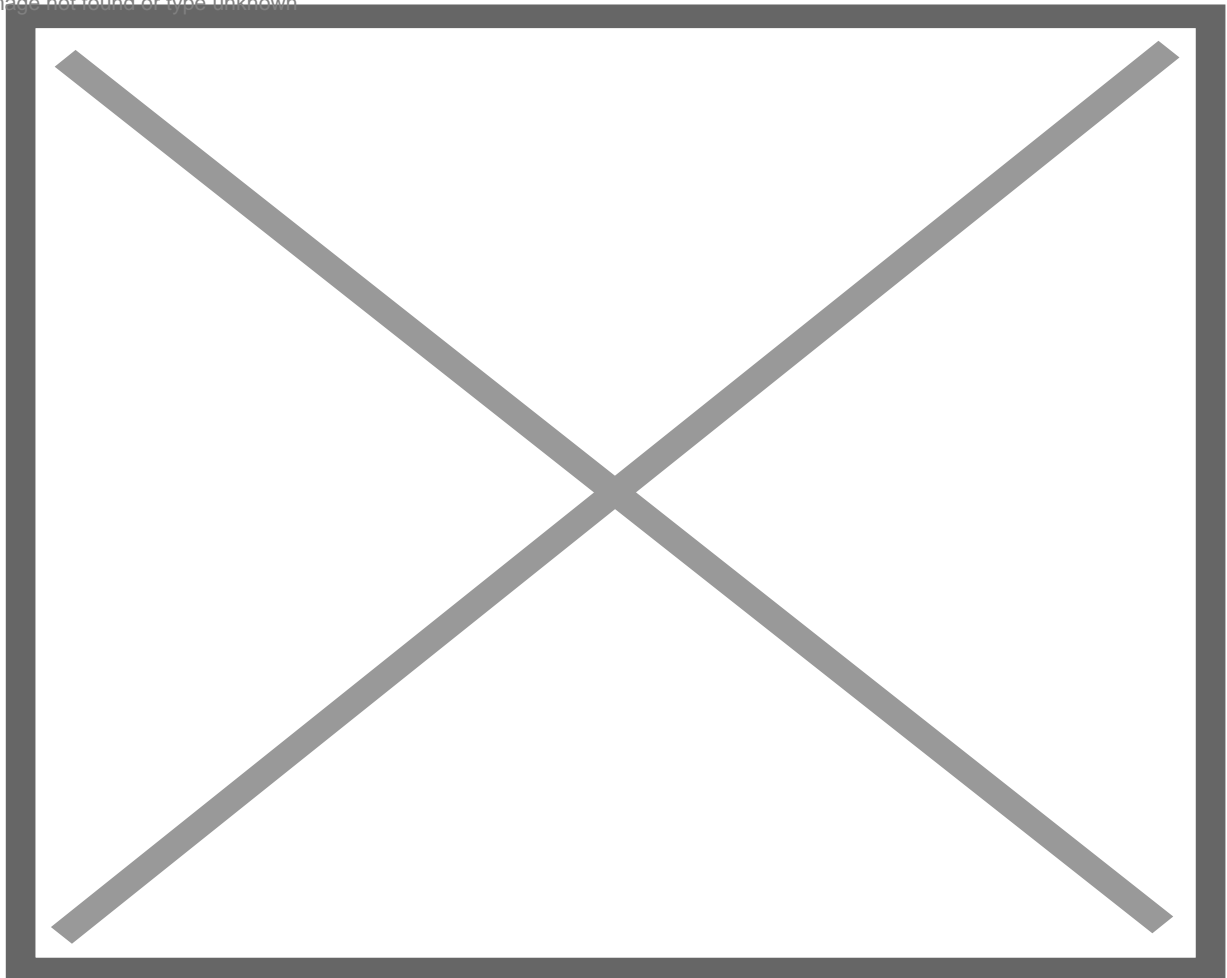
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A Small Number of Vaccinated People in USVI Have Contracted Covid-19; 8 Patients Hospitalized at Schneider Regional as St. Thomas Surge Continues; D.O.H. Awaiting Results of 50 Samples Tested for Covid Variants

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A small number of individuals in the territory fully vaccinated against Covid-19 have contracted the disease, the territory's top infectious disease official, Dr. Esther Ellis, revealed Monday, adding that the infections were mild and did not lead to hospitalization.

Speaking during the Bryan administration's Covid-19 weekly press briefing, Dr. Ellis revealed during questioning that while a majority of the persons who recently contracted the virus were

unvaccinated, a number of persons had actually been fully vaccinated but still got infected. Those instances, however, were not considered "breakthrough cases," said Dr. Ellis, which she described as vaccinated individuals who caught the virus and were hospitalized.

"They are not true breakthrough cases because they're not hospitalized or have severe symptoms," she said. "Really the purpose of the vaccine is to prevent hospitalization and it also prevents you from getting Covid most of the time, but there are a few vaccinated individuals that are positive."

The positive cases among vaccinated individuals were announced as St. Thomas continues to see a surge in Covid-19, with ninety-three cases on the island, followed by St. Croix with fifteen and St. John with one, according to the latest data provided by the V.I. Dept. of Health. Additionally, eight individuals were hospitalized at the Schneider Regional Medical Center with Covid symptoms, while the Juan F. Luis Hospital had one Covid patient. The territory's positivity rate stood at 3.09 percent as of Monday.

Relative to Covid variants in the territory, Dr. Ellis said 50 samples were sent for testing and those results were expected Tuesday or Wednesday. So far the department said it has not seen any Covid variants in the territory.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of April 15 said approximately 5,800 Covid-19 positive cases were out of the more than 66 million Americans who had completed full vaccination. The CDC said such cases are in line with expectations that the vaccines — though highly effective — are not foolproof.

"You will always see some breakthrough infections no matter the efficacy of your vaccine," Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-disease official, said in an interview with the Wall Street Journal. "Before people get excited about the quantitative number of infections, they need to understand what the denominator is, and we're going to see breakthroughs in numbers that are going to be well within the 90 percent, 95 percent, 97 percent effectiveness rates of the vaccines."

In a positive sign that vaccination is highly effective, the national positivity rate fell to 2 percent on Sunday according to WSJ, which cited Johns Hopkins University, representing the lowest recorded point since the onset of the pandemic in the U.S.

"As infections drop and vaccinations increase, the need to conduct screening tests will decline," said Jennifer Nuzzo to [WSJ](#), a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and lead epidemiologist for the university's Covid-19 testing insights initiative.

Relative to Covid variants, a rapidly spreading strain called Delta, which was first detected in India has spread to 66 countries, including the U.S., where it accounts for around 6 percent of samples sent for genetic sequencing. The good news is in the U.K., where the variant has forced a delay of planned easing of public health restrictions slated for June 21, research has concluded that vaccines offer significant protection against the Delta strain.

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