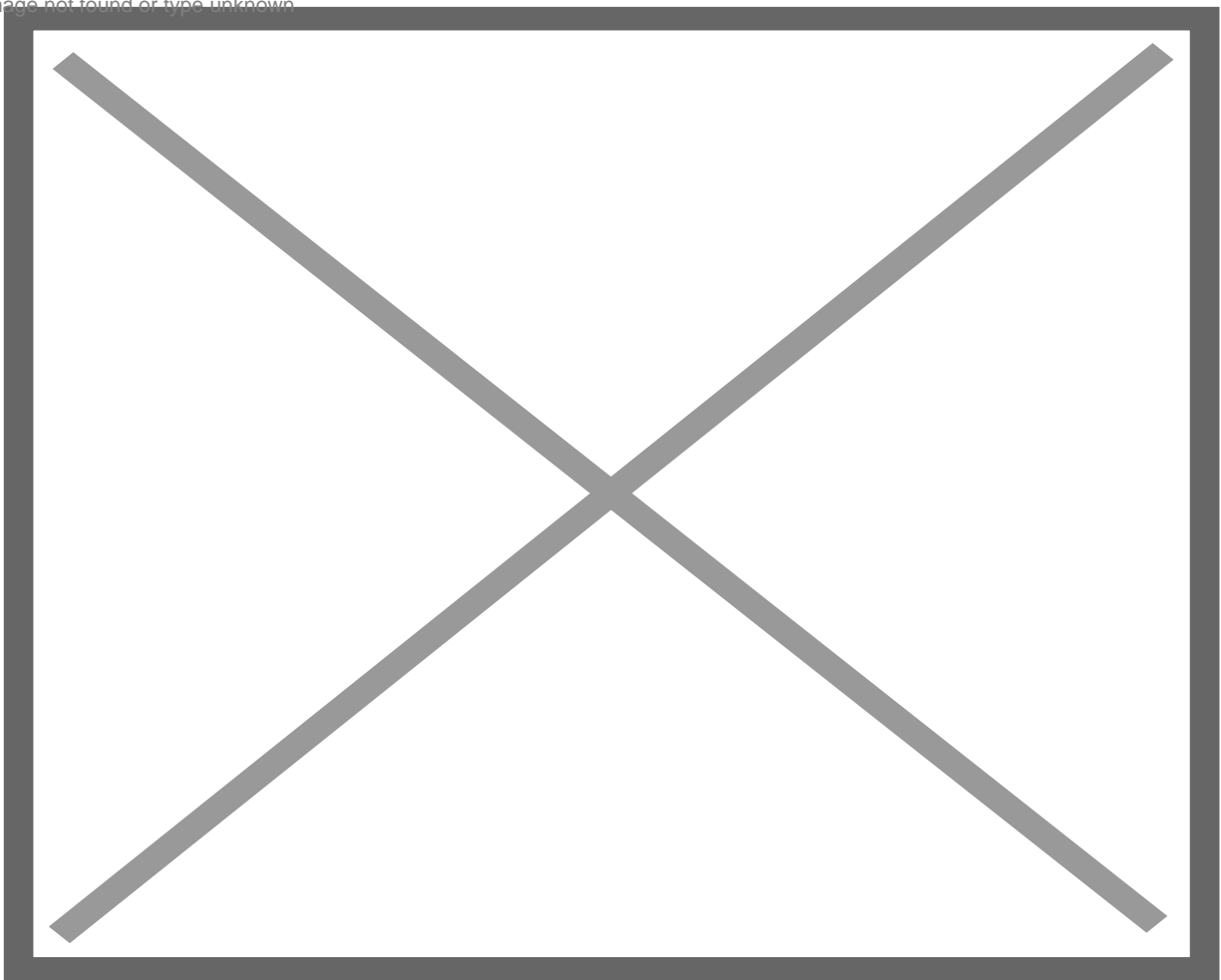


Bryan Cancels Weekend Appearances, Calls on Virgin Islanders to Stay Away From Mass Gatherings at Beaches, Clubs and Parties as Delta Variant Spreads and Hospitalizations Reach 19

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Ernice Gilbert **July 24, 2021**

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Governor Albert Bryan in a video statement Friday night appeared somber as he called on Virgin Islanders to forsake mass gatherings, including steering clear of parties, beaches, clubs and bars this weekend as Covid-19 cases in the USVI grow and the presence of the Delta variant now confirmed. Mr. Bryan also stated that nineteen patients were hospitalized with the disease — the most since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020.

"Our Dept. of Health has confirmed the contagious and the more deadly Delta variant of the Covid-19 virus. With the presence of the variant has come the most recent surge," Mr. Bryan said.

D.O.H. [confirmed](#) 189 active cases as of Friday: 51 on St. Croix, 132 on St. Thomas and six on St. John. This week's positivity rate stood at 3.67 percent, "and for the first time in the Virgin Islands, we have nineteen people hospitalized with Covid throughout the territory," Mr. Bryan said.

The governor said that of the thirty-five total Covid-related deaths, three occurred within the last 72 hours. "Needless to say, we find ourselves confronting the unknown once again," he said.

Mr. Bryan, who categorized the latest surge as a "life and death" situation, expressed reluctance to reimpose lockdowns. Instead, he called on Virgin Islanders to follow safety protocols put in place to quell the spread of the virus. "The only way we can avoid a return to the prior restrictions is if we can exercise true and real individual responsibility," Mr. Bryan stated.

He added, "As we head into the weekend you need to avoid mass gatherings. That means the parties, that means the congregating on the beaches, congregating on the board walks, the clubs and other meeting places like Magens Bay tramps. You need to wear your mask whether you are vaccinated or unvaccinated. Stop allowing strangers into your personal space, stop going into the personal space of strangers. Do the simple things, wash your hands, use hand sanitizer."

Mr. Bryan said he would cancel his personal appearances this weekend "out of an abundance of caution."

He added, "Most of the people who get Covid get it from the people they know, so be vigilant even among your friends and family because no one really knows when they have contracted the virus and how long they've had it."

The governor called on residents who have yet to be vaccinated to join the 38,220 Virgin Islanders who have taken the shot as he highlighted the benefits of becoming inoculated from Covid. "Of the 19 people we have in the hospital, 100 percent of them are unvaccinated," he said.