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V.I. Dept. of Health Confirms 40th Covid-19 Related Death in U.S. Virgin Islands

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The V.I. Dept. of Health confirmed Wednesday the 40th person to die of Covid-related causes in the territory, an escalation of deaths tied to the Delta variant of the virus.

The latest death, D.O.H. said, was a 77-year-old man on St. Croix. The Juan F. Luis Hospital has been affected by what Governor Albert Bryan [referred to on Monday](#) as cross-contamination, where persons visited the hospital without Covid and contracted the virus while at the medical facility.

As of Monday, St. Thomas had six Covid patients at the Schneider Regional Medical Center and 156 active infections, while St. Croix had ninety-five active infections and twenty-three patients at the Juan F. Luis Hospital. Mr. Bryan explained the situation. "The twenty-three [patients] on St.

Croix is an aberration because unfortunately there was cross-contamination at the hospital where patients went to the hospital Covid-free and ended up with Covid," said the governor.

Mr. Bryan said the administration was doing its best to control the state of affairs at the hospital. He told the Consortium Sunday that additional medical staff, through Pafford Medical Services, would provide support to JFL.

The governor also said he has been considering mandating Covid-19 vaccination for government employees. "If we were to move in that direction I would issue an executive order saying that every single government employee or any hiree must be vaccinated before they enter into work, or present a Covid test weekly. That would be the way we would go so you would still have a choice — but you would have to get that Covid test weekly," the governor said. Mr. Bryan said the administration has limits on how far it could push such mandates.

There are currently roughly 9,000 government employees, according to the governor.

President Joseph Biden announced last week mandatory vaccination, or all-day mask-wearing and weekly testing for federal employees and on-site contractors. He has also directed the U.S. Dept. of Defense to determine how and when Covid-19 shots can be added to the list of vaccinations required for members of the U.S. military, according to the White House.