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Beach Curfew Reinstated, Mass Gathering Limits Reduced as Covid Cases Rise to 325 and Hospitalizations Hold Steady

Coronavirus / **Published On August 06, 2021 04:37 PM /**

Staff Consortium **August 06, 2021**

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Beach near Point Udall By. VI CONSORTIUM

The Bryan administration on Friday afternoon said that as active Covid-19 cases continue to increase, Acting Governor Tregenza Roach has issued an executive order modifying a number of restrictions in an effort to stop the spread of the disease.

Governor Albert Bryan, who is scheduled to return to the territory today, has been in Puerto Rico from Thursday attending the Blue Tide Caribbean Summit.

Among the changes in the new executive order, which go into effect on Friday, August 6:

- Beaches will go back to closing at 4 p.m. on weekends and holidays
- The limit on mass gatherings is reduced from 100 persons to a maximum of 50 persons and the Virgin Islands Department of Health may approve events up to 100 persons if they are all vaccinated. (All gatherings or events of less than 50 persons still need approval from the Department of Health.)
- The Positive Antibody test will no longer be an option for the travel portal, and persons arriving to the Territory will need to show proof of vaccination received in the USVI or provide a negative PCR or antigen test taken within 5 days of their date of travel. (Note: Travelers arriving from the British Virgin Islands are required to present test results taken within 2 days of their arrival.)

According to Gov't House, Mr. Bryan has repeatedly stated, "The best and fastest way to stifle this current outbreak affecting unvaccinated Virgin Islanders is for all the residents of the Territory to get vaccinated, but I will do whatever it takes, within the confines of the law, to protect the health and well-being of the Virgin Islands public."

Mr. Roach also said that virtual learning will remain in effect until at least September 7, and that he is considering further measures, such as paring down the number of government offices that will remain open, and mandating automatic one-month closure of establishments found to be non-compliant with Covid-19 protocols.

As of Friday, the V.I. Dept. of Health Department was tracking more than 325 active cases of Covid-19 in the territory; there have been 40 fatalities attributed to the virus; and 29 people currently are hospitalized for the virus, with 4 of 18 patients on a ventilator at Luis Hospital on St. Croix and 4 of 11 patients on a ventilator at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas, according to Gov't House.

"While much of the current outbreak is being attributed to the Delta variant, the large number of residents who will not get vaccinated increases the possibility of the virus continuing to mutate, possibly into even more lethal variants," Mr. Bryan said. "As the data clearly shows, both here and across the United States, this second wave of infections and deaths is almost exclusively affecting people who aren't vaccinated and the only way to stop this rampant spread of COVID is for those people to taking the vaccine."

A copy of Mr. Roach's 27th Supplemental Executive Order, as well as all executive orders since the State of Emergency went into effect in March 2020, is available at the Government House website at <http://www.vi.gov/executive-orders/>