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Bryan Says Unvaccinated Gov't Employees Will Have to Test Weekly Beginning Sept. 9

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All government employees will have to test weekly for Covid-19 if they are not vaccinated beginning Sept. 9, Governor Albert Bryan said during Monday's Covid-19 press briefing. The governor said the announcement is part of a strategy to make life more difficult for Virgin Islanders who are not inoculated, though the action only affects government employees.

And he appeared to walk back [the original comments](#) somewhat, stating, "Our strategy is not to purposely make things more inconvenient for the unvaccinated, but the vaccinated people did what they were supposed to do - we're not going to make them suffer."

He added, "Everybody suffers as a result of people who don't want to get vaccinated for whatever reason it may be." We're going to make the laws that benefit the people who have taken the

vaccines."

To unvaccinated government employees, Mr. Bryan stated, "So if you want to get a cotton swab up your nose every single week, then so be it. That's what we mean by a little bit more difficult."

He said the weekly tests can be prevented if 15,000 get vaccinated before September 9.

The governor continued to stress the importance of the vaccines, and he encouraged residents to take the shot. He also announced a new incentive for Virgin Islanders who receive their second vaccine dose: \$250. Recipients of the \$250 will still be eligible for the Vax-to-Win lottery.

Elsewhere, the governor announced that there will be a special drawing dubbed "Healthcare Heroes" for healthcare workers, which includes selfsame prizes as the drawings for [school-based personnel](#). The drawing will take place on October 4 and winners will be announced on October 12. Eligible persons for the drawing must be registered by Oct. 1.

"To win you simply have to prove that you are employed at a healthcare or allied healthcare facility at the time of the drawing, that you have been fully vaccinated in the Virgin Islands and that you are indeed a resident of the territory," the governor made known.

Active cases shot up to 336 as of Saturday, according to the V.I. Dept. of Health. St. Thomas accounted for 201, St. Croix for 121 and St. John for 14 of those cases. Hospitalizations were at twenty-nine as of Friday, with eight patients on ventilators — four at the Schneider Regional Medical Center and four at the Juan F. Luis Medical Center, according to Gov't House.