

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Latest Vax-to-Win Lottery Winners Announced; B.I.R. to Issue \$10 Million in Tax Refunds This Week

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From left to right, St. Croix District Winner Jarell O' Connor, and Segunda Freylinger from the St. Thomas-St. John District. By. GOV'T HOUSE

The VI Lottery on Monday announced the most recent winners of the "Vax-to-Win" Lottery during the Bryan administration's Covid-19 response press briefing.

Jarell O'Connor was the winner in the St. Croix district, while Segunda Freylinger was the winner in the St. Thomas-St-John District. Both winners are fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and will receive \$100,000 each. Dwayne Benjamin, assistant executive director of the V.I. Lottery announced the winners.

Governor Albert Bryan announced that a 61-year-old woman from St. Thomas was the 54th and latest Virgin Islander to pass away as a result of Covid-19. D.O.H. Infectious Disease Specialist Dr. Tai Hunte-Ceasar said that since the presence of the Delta Variant in the USVI, there have been 21 deaths from “complications due to Covid-19,” and that “none of the people who died were fully vaccinated.”

There were five Covid-19 admissions at the Juan F. Luis Hospital as of Monday, with all patients ventilated. At the Schneider Regional Medical Center there were ten patients, four of whom Ms. Hunte-Ceasar believed were ventilated.

She said the territory’s vaccination rate stood at 47.3 percent, and that the USVI needed at least 22.3 percent more of the population to become fully vaccinated to reach herd immunity.

When questioned by the Consortium about a percentage higher than 70 percent to achieve herd immunity as recommended by health experts, Ms. Hunte-Ceasar responded, “My stance on it is we need to achieve the maximum number possible, so we need to have at least 70 percent as the next immediate goal post and then yes, because we have significant variants that are emerging, we want to have at least 85 percent of our population vaccinated. But the goal is to get as many people vaccinated as possible.”

As You File, We Pay

Elsewhere, Mr. Bryan announced that the Bureau of Internal Revenue will be issuing \$10 million in tax refunds this week.

The governor expects the latest issuance to “address all of the pending 2018 returns, anything prior to tax year 2018 and those 2019 returns that were filed during the first two months of last year.”

He said a goal of the administration is “to get current so when you file, we pay.”

The governor added: “What we owe to the people we want to pay and we will have much more announcements as the time goes by and [as] our treasury gets stronger. So work with with us and just have a little patience.””