Dept. of Health Confirms 58th, 59th and 60th Covid-Related Deaths in U.S. Virgin Islands
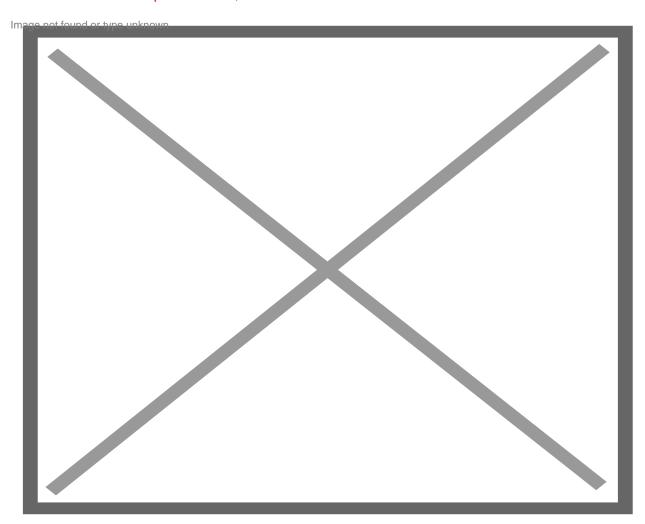
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The V.I. Dept. of Health on Friday announced three additional Covid-19 related deaths in the U.S. Virgin Islands, bringing the territory's total since the pandemic to sixty, twenty-seven of which took place beginning late July when the Delta variant was first detected in the USVI, according to local health officials.

"After further investigating cause of death and ensuring notification of next of kin, the Virgin Islands Department of Health is saddened to confirm the territory's fifty-eighth, fifty-ninth and sixtieth deaths related to Covid-19. The deceased are a 61-year-old male, a 78-year-old male and a 80-year-old female. All of these deaths were on St. Thomas," said D.O.H. in a release.

Earlier Friday, the health department confirmed that the highly contagious Delta variant of Covid-19 is now the predominant strain in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

D.O.H.'s Division of Epidemiology has been working with Yale University to test samples from positive Covid-19 cases. Last week, 12 Covid-19 samples were sequenced and 11 (91.7%) of those were confirmed to be the Delta variant. One sample (8.3%) was confirmed to be the Alpha variant (B.1.1.7), the department said.

D.O.H. said new cases continue to rise amongst unvaccinated individuals. As of September 2, there were 181 active cases in the territory and the positivity rate is 3.27 percent.

"With this surge in positive cases there is a greater chance for the virus to continue to mutate," D.O.H. said. Health officials said mutations can make the virus more virulent and could potentially cause it to be resistant to the vaccine in the future The sooner more residents get vaccinated, the risk of the virus mutating will decrease.

Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis said, "The Covid-19 vaccine is effective at preventing hospitalizations and death, and if you have not gotten vaccinated I urge you to get the vaccine to protect not only yourself, but your loved ones, and the community as a whole."

D.O.H. said anyone 12 and older can get the Covid-19 vaccine by walking into a Community Vaccination Center by calling (340) 777-8227 or by scheduling yourself online at covid19usvi.com/vaccines.

St. Croix's Community Vaccination Center is located at the Nissan Center on St. Croix which is in La Grande Princesse, adjacent to the Honda Dealership and The Paint Shop, on the same side of the street as Food Town.

On St. Thomas the Community Vaccination Center is located at the Community Health Clinic on the 2nd floor at the Schneider Regional Medical Center.