

logo not found or type unknown

## USVI Ranks 7 in Covid Deaths Per 100,000 Residents Nationwide; St. Croix Covid-19 Active Cases Jump to 149 as St. Thomas Declines

Coronavirus / **Published On September 13, 2021 06:03 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **September 13, 2021**

Image not found or type unknown



The U.S. Virgin Islands, which as of Thursday had the lowest Covid-19 vaccination rate in the United States according to Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion, currently ranks 7 in all of the country in deaths per 100,000 residents.

According to data the New York Times continues to [gather](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Johns Hopkins University and the Covid Tracking Project, the USVI as of Monday had [among the highest](#) deaths per 100,000 residents at 0.81. Topping the list was Mississippi at 1.75, followed by Florida at 1.63, Louisiana 1.07, South Carolina 1.02, Texas 0.88, and Arkansas 0.83.

Meanwhile, Covid-19 infections are increasing on St. Croix and declining in St. Thomas. The territory's capital for a long period had led active cases and still leads in the total number of deaths related to the virus.

"Our numbers on St. Croix are definitely going up," said Ms. Encarnacion Thursday.

As of Saturday, total active cases territory-wide stood at 223, with St. Croix leading the islands with 149, followed by St. Thomas with 63, and St. John with 3. Total deaths territory-wide [stood at 66](#) as of Saturday, a majority of which have been recorded in St. Thomas. To date, St. Croix has recorded 22 deaths, St. Thomas 41, and St. John 3, according to D.O.H. data.

Governor Albert Bryan has said decisions relative to escalating or easing Covid-19 restrictions are dependent on how the islands are faring.

So far for September, 10 people have died from causes related to Covid-19, a trend that has concerned local leaders as they continue to advocate vaccination. "The best mitigation factor for Covid-19 is becoming vaccinated," Ms. Encarnacion stated Thursday.

New research data published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday [found that](#) people who are not vaccinated against Covid-19 were 4.6 times likelier to get infected, 10 times more likely to be hospitalized, and 11 times more likely to die from the virus.

So far the administration's efforts — including a vaccine lottery providing \$100,000 to winners — have not moved the needle decisively. Mr. Bryan has changed his tone relative to encouraging vaccination, testing a more conciliatory approach rather than [aggressive language](#) that served to alienate some, hardening their skepticism of the vaccines.

"The better approach is let's work together to get this done. We got to stop dividing us and work together. And if you noticed I've changed my approach in the last couple of weeks and say, let's give people every single reason in the world to get vaccinated," the governor told the Consortium [late last month](#), speaking to incentives the administration has been offering instead of rhetoric that would serve to divide. "We have so much to do it's not really worth creating the amount of emotion to get everybody to do it," he said of mandatory vaccination.

Meantime, President Joe Biden on Thursday [made a sweeping announcement](#) that calls for private employers with 100 or more employees to require workers to be vaccinated or undergo weekly testing. The announcement will impact the U.S. Virgin Islands, where private businesses and the central government have steered clear of such mandates. The mandate also requires federal employees in the executive branch and government contractors to be vaccinated.

The announcement is part of a six-point Biden administration initiative to curb the spread of the Covid-19 virus, whose Delta variant has disrupted America's march back to normalcy. It includes boosting vaccinations, the improvement of access to testing, and making Covid-19 treatments more readily available.

The Biden mandate is set to affect roughly 80 million private sector workers, and businesses that don't comply can face fines of up to \$14,000 per violation. The mandate also requires vaccination for workers in a plurality of healthcare settings that receive Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement. The Juan F. Luis Hospital and the Schneider Regional Medical Center are Medicare and Medicaid participating institutions.

Additionally, all federal employees in the USVI working on the executive branch level will need to be vaccinated, according to the Biden initiative. Those include V.I. District Court, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Social Security Administration employees, among others.

© Viconsortium 2024