

The Virgin Islands Consortium

V.I. Dept. of Health Confirms 79th and 80th Covid-Related Deaths in USVI

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The V.I. Dept. of Health on Monday confirmed the 79th and 80th Covid-related deaths in the U.S. Virgin Islands — just under two weeks after it announced the 76th, 77th and 78th deaths.

"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 seventy-ninth and eightieth deaths related to Covid-19. The deceased are a 91-year-old male on St. Thomas and a 79-year-old female on St. Croix," said the department.

D.O.H. said it continues to work to slow the spread of the virus, and it urged residents to follow Covid-19 protocols.

Active cases decrease in USVI

For the first time in months Covid-19 cases in the U.S. Virgin Islands have fallen below 100 active infections, a decline that follows similar trends in the U.S. as the Delta variant of the disease continues to crest.

According to the V.I. Dept. of Health, as of Saturday there were 92 active Covid-19 cases territory-wide: 73 on St. Croix and 19 on St. Thomas. St. John had no active cases as of Saturday, [according to D.O.H.](#)

The last time the territory was below 100 cases was [early July](#) — just before the Delta variant took hold.

Earlier this month, Governor Albert Bryan told the Consortium he would loosen restrictions once active cases fall below 100, adding that his administration was waiting for the numbers on St. Croix to retreat. "We're waiting for St. Croix to calm down. Once that surge is done, then we're going to start to lift a lot of restrictions," Mr. Bryan said. "I want to do it; you can't do that with St. Croix going through this little surge. Once we get St. Croix below 100 we will feel more comfortable about freeing up because we can't do this forever; we've got to get back to business."

The ebbing of Covid-19 in the USVI follows trends similar to what's occurring in the U.S., though the territory lags behind in a key area: vaccination. According to data provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S.'s seven-day average for Covid-19 hospitalizations and death fell alongside active cases, which have been declining for five consecutive weeks. The CDC's Covid data tracker weekly review [shows an overall decrease](#) of 15.1 percent as of Oct. 22.

According to the CDC, as of October 21 more than 189 million people in the United States (approximately 57 percent of the total U.S. population) are fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Additionally, about 219.6 million people — 66.2 percent of the total U.S. population — have received at least one dose of a Covid vaccine.

According to tracking data provided by the New York Times, as of Monday 46 percent of eligible Virgin Islanders are fully vaccinated against Covid-19, while 52 percent have received at least one dose. The low vaccination rate in the territory has frustrated the Bryan administration, which has employed a number of strategies to boost rates but have yielded only marginal results.

What would loosened restrictions look like?

"Things that I want to do away with is the nightclub curfews," the governor told the Consortium [recently](#). "We've already hosted a few vaccine-only food events, you're going to see we're going to be doing more vaccine-only events. We have the yacht show coming up in November; we're going to be expanding the amount of people allowed in a place. For vaccinated-only we're looking at 250 or more if it's all vaccinated people. We're promoting these vaccinated events and actually sponsoring them as we go.

"The other things we're thinking about is accepting vaccination cards from other states so that will make traveling to and from the territory a little bit easier for our guests.

"But that's the most of it because at this point we don't have much more restrictions in place. The beaches are open; schools we're trying our best to get back open and to normal [but] it's just hard. We keep having closures but it's a learning process as we go along. We got to figure out a way how to live with this thing cause it's not going away."

Relative to the Crucian Christmas Festival, the governor told reporters, "It really doesn't look positive for festival this year, I can say that right out because we just don't have the vaccine rate."

He said while the vaccination rate in the USVI for people over 60 years old stood at over 70 percent, "the young people just won't take the vaccine so it doesn't look like we're going to have any [festival] unless it starts to turn around."

And in regards to the V.I. Carnival which takes place in April in Charlotte Amalie, Mr. Bryan said that it's months away so a determination has not been made."