

logo not found or type unknown

Bryan Removes Nighttime Curfew on Bars and Nightclubs, Lifts 11 p.m. Ban on Drink Sales, Raises Event Attendance Limit to 250 for Vaccinated People

Top Stories / **Published On October 26, 2021 04:02 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **October 26, 2021**

Image not found or type unknown



A 'Sunny Side Up' Event organized by Island Vybez Promotions and held in 2019 at the Captain Morgan Visitor Center. By. Reemy-Reemz Photograpy & Videography

Governor Albert Bryan told the Consortium earlier this month [he was prepared](#) to ease Covid-19 restrictions once St. Croix cases dipped below 100. On Tuesday, speaking from Denver, Colorado, Mr. Bryan made a number of announcements easing limitations on Virgin Islanders as St. Croix active Covid cases have fallen well below 100, with a territory-wide total of 83 active cases as of Tuesday: 67 on St. Croix and 16 on St. Thomas. There were no Covid-19 active infections on St. John, as the Delta variant of the virulent disease diminishes.

Furthermore, USVI Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis said today that the territory's positivity rate decreased by almost half, with Mr. Bryan revealing the new rate to be 1.5 percent. Dr. Ellis warned that with travel increasing and the holidays approaching, "we will see intermittent surges" especially since the USVI has not achieved herd immunity.

The territory has among the lowest Covid-19 vaccination rates in the U.S., standing at 46 percent of the eligible population as of Monday.

Mr. Bryan said, "I firmly believe that despite the surges, our current number of active cases and our seven-day positivity rate are an indicator that vaccines certainly do work. So as we forge forward and adjust to this new normal, I will begin to start relaxing some of the restrictions that we have had in place for well over a year now."

According to the governor, effective Friday, Oct. 29 at 5:00 p.m., the 11:00 p.m. moratorium on the sale of alcohol will end. Also on Friday bars/nightclubs and restaurants may remain open until the closure time indicated on their license. "In other words we're removing the 12 o'clock and 11 o'clock curfews of drinking and [facilities] closure," Mr. Bryan said.

Mr. Bryan further announced the removal of restrictions on dancing within establishments, though persons attending must wear masks and try to social distance as much as possible from other couples and other people.

The governor raised the limit to 250 as the number of people who can attend an event, be it entertainment, faith event or otherwise. He later clarified that those persons must be vaccinated, and that the establishment owner must receive approval from the V.I. Dept. of Health before moving forward. The health commissioner may also approve larger gatherings at her discretion, said the governor. "If there's going to be a mix of people in there, the usual 100-person restrictions are still in place," he said.

In many jurisdictions, proof of vaccination, proof of a recent negative Covid-19 test and proof of recent recovery from the virus are all forms of clearance to attend events. The governor did not immediately respond to a request for comment on why those were not included as passes to entertainment and similar gatherings under the new order. Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion could not immediately respond.

"I think that's a good number to stop at now," Mr. Bryan said, referring to the 250 limit set to take effect this weekend. "But please remember that we are still in a global pandemic, but we must forge forward and the relaxing of restrictions is not an invitation for reckless and wanton behavior."

The governor added that the restrictions "can easily be reimposed if we see behavior that is contributing to our surges."