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Governor Walks Back Plan to Verify Vaccination Status of Mainland Americans Through USVI Portal System

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Governor Albert Bryan on Tuesday walked back a plan to verify people vaccinated in the U.S. for travel to the USVI using the territory's travel portal system, stating that he wants to be sure that tourists traveling here are free of Covid-19.

Mr. Bryan's latest comments are in stark contrast to [what he said on Oct. 4](#), when he stated that people who got fully vaccinated in any U.S. state would soon be able to verify their vaccination status through the USVI Travel Portal.

At the time, the territory's leader said once in place, the system "will make travel to and from the territory a little bit easier for our guests." The program was expected to go live "in two to three weeks," according to the governor.

On Tuesday, Mr. Bryan told the Consortium in response to a question during his weekly press briefing that he had doubts about the program. "I really have my mixed feelings on that," he said. "I could tell you my cabinet members are pushing me towards that, but I really feel safe making sure that people who are not from here, they're not residents, get tested."

Currently, only people vaccinated in the U.S. Virgin Islands can use the travel portal's vaccination verification system. All other individuals must upload an acceptable Covid-19 test result and wait to be verified by the system, which is in part manned by humans. Vaccinated Virgin Islanders can simply upload their information and await verification.

Following the original announcement to implement vaccination verification of Americans on the mainland through the travel portal, the governor fielded some blowback. Many residents contended that Mr. Bryan was inviting more Covid cases into the USVI, as vaccinated individuals, though less likely than the unvaccinated, [are still known to spread the disease](#).

On Tuesday, Mr. Bryan said left up to him, everybody — included persons vaccinated in the territory — would be tested. "Best case scenario, we want to test everybody, [including] residents, but we understand the strain it puts on our community. So we're allowing for [persons vaccinated in the territory] to travel back and forth without that. But if we're going to be having the kind of season we had last year, I want to make sure that the people coming down here are vaccinated and are tested. If not anything else, making sure they get tested before they get on that plane."

The territory's Covid-19 cases continue to drop. As of Wednesday morning, [there were 73 active Covid-19](#) infections territory-wide: 62 on St. Croix, 11 on St. Thomas and there were no active cases on St. John.