THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 24, 2020
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Governor Bryan Updates Residents on COVID-19

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — During a press conference Friday to update residents on COVID-19, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. shared some positive news about the Territory's fight against the coronavirus pandemic that the Virgin Islands Department of Health is currently tracking only a single active case.

"This, without a doubt, is welcomed news but certainly not cause for celebration, as we are still very much in the fight against the spread of coronavirus in our community," Governor Bryan said.

He also noted that Friday marked Day 80 of his Administration's official response to COVID-19.

To date, there have been 731 people tested for the virus, with 642 of those tests coming back negative, 54 cases testing positive, including three fatalities, and 35 tests pending. There are no COVID-19 cases at either hospital.

Despite the positive track the virus appears to be taking in the Territory, Governor Bryan said his Administration continues to stockpile resources and supplies to fight the spread of the virus and currently is looking for additional health care professionals.

"We are pursuing several avenues to provide additional staffing," the Governor said. "We are in final negotiations with Doctors Without Borders, the Islamic Medical Association and other programs to bring physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, infection specialists and others to bolster our team."

Governor Bryan said his team is diligently staying prepared for what could come next.

“We have done a good job mitigating the spread, but as I continue to say, unlike a hurricane, we do not know whether we are at the front, in the eye or at the tail of the storm,” he said.

Governor Bryan also said the Virgin islands Department of Labor continues to build capacity while processing unemployment claims.

“We recognize that many businesses have had to substantially limit their operations and, in some cases unfortunately, close their doors, consequently causing many residents to lose their jobs,” he said Friday. “As of yesterday, the V.I. Department of Labor has issued 1,390 unemployment insurance checks totaling $969,176.”

Governor Bryan also announced that water-testing has resumed at the Territory’s public beaches and that all 31 beaches that are tested were cleared for use.

“That’s fantastic news,” the Governor said. “I want the public to remember, though, that the prohibition on mass gatherings of over 10 still remains in effect. And even in these groupings, please maintain safe social distancing, at least 6 feet from one another, and you should limit your contact to people in your household.”

The Governor also thanked all members of the health industry, particularly those individuals on the front line in dealing with COVID-19, for their hard work, dedication and sacrifice, and he wished Happy Ramadan to the Islamic community.

Governor Bryan’s next press conference on COVID-19 is tentatively scheduled for Monday. Beginning next week, the Governor will scale back his COVID-19 press conferences to two per week; however, “Press Box,” the live podcast featuring agency and department heads, will continue to be live-streamed on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. on the Government House Facebook page at facebook.com/governmenthouseusvi.

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