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Press Contact
Michelle Francis
(340) 718-2980
Michelle.Francis@dhs.vi.gov

USVI Department of Human Services Addresses Positive COVID-19 Test

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — The Virgin Islands Department of Health has confirmed that a Department of Human Services employee has tested COVID positive this weekend. "Though the Department of Human Services has implemented COVID-19 practices to help prevent the spread of the virus, we know that the risk of contracting the infection exists, especially as our exposure to COVID-19 increases daily as the territory's numbers increase," said Commissioner of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Kimberly Causey-Gomez. "The reality that we all now have to face is that several of our local agencies have positive cases and we must all follow best practices in order to protect ourselves and others while we continue operations. We are working in close connection with the Department of Health to ensure availability of prompt testing and in tandem with the testing, we have implemented enhanced sanitizing and additional prevention measures", she further explained.

All staff and close contacts of the affected unit have been notified to ensure their safety within the parameters of HIPAA guidelines to protect the individual's identity. Additionally, DHS is working to provide support to the impacted staff member and their family. The individual is in stable condition and recovering at home.

CURRENT ACTIONS BEING TAKEN

- Specific staff members of the impacted unit have been advised of the current status and of detailed next steps.
- A notification was sent to all staff advising of the COVID 19 positive result of one of our team members.
- DHS has arranged for testing of all impacted persons within the auspices of DHS through the Department of Health.
- Professional sanitization and cleaning (of the impacted area) is being conducted this week.



The virus that causes COVID-19 is spread between people who are in close contact with one another (about 6 feet). The virus is spread through respiratory droplets that are produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks.

Please be reminded to maintain CDC best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Wear your mask (covering your nose and mouth while in the workplace).
- Maintain social distance.
- Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds, often.
- Wear appropriate other PPE while in contact with other staff or clients.
- Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol when you cannot your wash hands.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently used surfaces.
- Share FACTS, not rumors.

The Department of Human Services requests prayers for all their staff, on the front lines, daily caring for members of the public.

For general information, please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi or on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/usvidhs) at US Virgin Islands Department of Human Services. If you are experiencing any of the coronavirus symptoms listed on the Department of Health website (listed below), self-quarantine and immediately contact the Department of Health:

- V.I. DOH website: https://doh.vi.gov/
- **COVID-19 Hotline:** (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519

For more information on Covid19, the new strain of coronavirus, please visit the USVI Department of Health's website, www.doh.vi.gov/coronavirus or text COVID19USVI to 888777.
#COVID19USVI

The Department of Human Services (VIDHS) exists to provide social services to members in our community with diverse needs. In times of national uncertainty and hardship we act as a safety-net and exist to inspire hope and empower change through non-judgmental, quality delivery of needed services and resources. Please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi for more information.

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3011 Golden Rock • Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00820 • (340) 718-2980 ph • (340) 773-6121 fax
1303 Hospital Ground, Suite 1 • St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802-6722 • (340) 774-1166 ph • (340) 774-3466 fax