



**GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES**

VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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PRESS RELEASE

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**Health Department Announces Three Additional Confirmed
COVID-19 Cases**

St. Croix, US Virgin Islands (March 28, 2020)—The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Health has received confirmation of three new confirmed cases of COVID-19 disease. This brings the territory's total confirmed cases to twenty-two—eleven on Croix, ten on St. Thomas, and one on St. John.

On March 27, health officials reported three new cases. The latest St. Thomas cases were a traveler and an individual who had contact with a sick traveler. Since our last announcement, the Department of Health received confirmation of three additional cases, to include the first confirmed case on St. John. All three new confirmed cases were either travelers or contacts of confirmed cases that have been in quarantine. None of the latest confirmed cases were community-acquired. Because most confirmed cases are travel-related, it is especially critical to self-quarantine after travel while monitoring your symptoms. During this self-monitoring period, it is important to avoid close contact with others including those you may live with. Even for non-travelers, it is paramount to understand the risk of transmission among those you may have close contact with. Physical distancing is one of the best ways to reduce the risk of exposure and transmission.

The [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) says, "Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected." Social distancing, according to the CDC, is "remaining out of congregate

PRESS RELEASE

Health Department Announces Two New Confirmed Territorial COVID-19 Case

March 27, 2020

Page 2

settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible.

Persons Under Investigation Update (183 CUMULATIVE TOTAL):

- Positive: 22 (11 STX; 10 STT; 1 STJ)
- Negative: 106 (70 STT; 32 STX; 4 STJ)
- Pending: 55 (33 STT; 19 STX; 3 STJ)

Health officials, in collaboration with other agencies, have been closely monitoring the global outbreak and building capacity to prevent the spread of the disease in the territory) and to respond to positive cases.

The department's Epidemiology Division continues to provide testing for cases that meet the Person Under Investigation (PUI) criteria, conduct contact tracing and assist healthcare providers and the public with up-to-date education as to what to do to prevent additional cases.

While the risk of severe illness for most is low, the risk for transmission is high and precautions must still be taken to avoid widespread transmission within our community. A person may also get COVID-19 by touching a surface that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes.

To avoid COVID-19 and help prevent its spread, Department of Health officials recommend the following steps:

- Limit socializing and close contact with others, as persons without symptoms can still transmit the virus.
- While sick, avoid contact with others.
- Avoid persons with cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and discard the tissue. Wash your hands immediately. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60 percent alcohol.

COVID-19 symptoms reported include fever, cough and shortness of breath. It spreads mostly between people who are in close contact via respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Persons who have contracted COVID-19 are most likely to spread it when they are most symptomatic. This means they are more likely to spread it to others when they are sick.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention currently recommends avoiding non-essential travel to any location as well as no cruise ship travel. Postponing vacations to the territory will also lessen the impact of COVID-19 on our small community. If you are returning home to the U.S.V.I., you must quarantine for 14 days and self-monitor your symptoms. Older adults and

PRESS RELEASE

Health Department Announces Two New Confirmed Territorial COVID-19 Case

March 27, 2020

Page 2

those with underlying health issues are particularly vulnerable and should avoid crowded places and non-essential air travel to decrease their risk for virus transmission.

If you are experiencing symptoms like a cough, fever, and shortness of breath, and have traveled anywhere in the last 14 days, OR have had contact with a confirmed case please self-quarantine and call (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519 from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Sunday.

These phone numbers are only to be used if you meet the criteria above and suspect you may have the virus. You will be given instructions on what to do next and that may include isolating yourself from others.

If you have a medical emergency, call 911.

For more information, visit: doh.vi.gov/coronavirus or cdc.gov/covid19. For updates, text COVID19USVI to 888777.

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