



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 10, 2020

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## **Governor Bryan Addresses False Rumors Regarding USVI and COVID-19 Vaccine**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has issued a statement debunking a number of false rumors and misinformation that is circulating on social media platforms regarding the U.S. Virgin Islands and potential COVID-19 vaccines that are being developed.

The rumors apparently were started after a report by “60 Minutes” about the logistics of delivering a Coronavirus vaccine across the United States and the territories as part of the federal government’s “Operation Warp Speed.”

The CBS News program reported that the Territory does not have the capability to provide ultra-cold storage for a potential vaccine; however, some residents are posting to social media that “60 Minutes” reported that residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands would be used as test subjects for a possible vaccine.

A transcript of the “60 Minutes” report can be found at [this link](#).

“There is no basis for these false statements being propagated on social media platforms, and, in fact, they are harmful to the health and well-being of our community in that they instill unnecessary fear and doubt among residents and could potentially cause some Virgin Islanders to forgo using a safe vaccine that could protect them against the virus,” Governor Bryan said.

“I am as anxious and hopeful as anyone that an effective vaccine be developed as quickly as possible to protect all Americans against COVID-19,” Governor Bryan said. “However, I will not put the public health of our community at risk, and I will not approve distribution of a vaccine that has not been thoroughly vetted and approved by the Food and Drug Administration and that has not been meticulously tested.”

The Governor urges USVI residents to get accurate and authentic information from legitimate sources, such as the Virgin Islands Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or Government House and to dismiss baseless misinformation from social media platforms.

During a hearing last month in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature about Governor Bryan's request for a 60-day extension to the State of Emergency, Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion said she has established a Vaccination Task Force to establish protocols and logistics for distributing COVID-19 vaccinations once a safe vaccine is approved by the FDA.

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