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## **Governor Bryan Extends ‘Stay-at-Home’ Order**

*Reopening of Schools Postponed Until September 14,  
All School Campuses Remain Closed*

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – During his weekly press briefing on Monday, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. gave details about why he extended the “Stay-at-Home” order until September 8.

As a result of the Governor extending the current restrictions, the planned September 8 reopening of the Territory’s public schools has been pushed back to September 14, and all school campuses remain closed.

“While we are seeing a welcomed drop in the positivity rate, the number of infections attributed to community spread and the number of hospitalizations is not where we would like to see them,” Governor Bryan said. “Suffice to say, we believe the Stay-at-Home order has been effective in reducing the spread of the virus, and we look forward to relaxing those restrictions next week if these trends continue.”

The Governor also reminded residents that their compliance with the Stay-at-Home restrictions is vital to stopping the spread of COVID-19.

“We simply ask that you all just do the right thing. The only way to get through this is to adhere to the health guidelines,” Governor Bryan said. “We will not beat COVID while attending parties, get-togethers and other mass gatherings or being in close quarters with individuals while not following the masking guidelines.”

“It doesn’t matter if they are your friends or family. There is no way you can know their recent exposure to the virus,” the Governor said. “Be smart and be responsible. That is the only way you can guarantee your safety and the safety of the family members in your house.”

### **Delayed Opening of Schools**

Governor Bryan’s decision to delay the opening of the schools means that all school campuses – including those of parochial and private schools – remain closed.

“The decision for this delay was to ensure the safety of our teachers, faculty and staff who were scheduled to return to our campuses this week,” Governor Bryan said. “However, the Department of Education continues to progress with its school reopening plans, and we are looking forward to a safe and successful start to what will be an unprecedented school year.”

### **Matching Fund Securitization**

After thanking the eight members of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature – Senate President Novelle Francis Jr. and Senators Alicia Barnes, Marvin Blyden, Allison DeGazon, Donna Frett-Gregory, Stedmann Hodge, Myron Jackson and Athneil “Bobby” Thomas – Governor Bryan addressed some of the misinformation about refinancing the bonds backed by the Internal Revenue Matching Fund.

“There has been a lot of misinformation placed on the record and shared in the community. That information has led some people to believe that this transaction carries greater risk than it actually does,” Governor Bryan said. “On its face, it is a simple refinancing of our bonds that is only complicated by the poor credit rating of the Government of the Virgin Islands.”

Last week’s Senate approval only authorizes the Bryan/Roach Administration to fully explore the opportunity with the necessary parties.

“The opportunity to refinance existing debt in a way that addresses our urgent financial needs is too promising to ignore,” Governor Bryan said. “At the very least, we believe we can present a plan that generates additional cash flow for the Government of the Virgin Islands for the next decade.”

### **P-EBT**

The Department of Human Services has begun issuing P-EBT benefits to families with school-age children who qualified for the School Lunch Program.

Students and families who are current SNAP recipients were among the first to receive P-EBT benefits, which were applied to their SNAP card balances. Physical cards are being mailed and should be received within the next two weeks. Cards have been sent to the addresses provided by the schools, and recipients.

“I want to assure the public that everyone who is entitled to this benefit will receive it,” Governor Bryan said.

## **Unemployment**

- To date, the Virgin Islands Department of Labor (VIDOL) has issued 4,045 unemployment insurance checks totaling more than \$26 million.
- The department also has issued 26,284 Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation checks totaling \$40 million.
- VIDOL has issued \$1,325,057 in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance to self-employed Virgin Islanders and \$526,030 in Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation.
- In total, the Bryan-Roach Administration has issued 60,983 checks totaling \$67,817,467 through the Virgin Islands Department of Labor.

## **COVID-19 cases**

- Currently tracking 222 active cases
- 16,250 individuals tested to date (more than 16% of the population)
- 15,100 of those tests were negative
- 1,134 tests came back positive
- 898 people have recovered
- 15 fatalities to date
- Two COVID-19 patients are hospitalized, with one of them on a ventilator, at Juan F. Luis Hospital on St. Croix.
- Nine COVID-19 patients are hospitalized, with one of them on a ventilator, at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

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