United States Virgin Islands

Department of Health

FISCAL YEAR 2027
BUDGET TESTIMONY

Testimony before the

Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance
36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Presented by

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Commissioner of Health

INTRODUCTION

Good day, Honorable Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Chair of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance; Honorable Senator Marvin A. Blyden, Vice-Chair; committee members, and members of the 36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, as well as those listening and viewing. I am Justa "Tita" Encarnacion, Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Health (VIDOH). We are grateful for the opportunity to share our Fiscal Year 2026 accomplishments and outline our goals for the Governor's recommended FY2027 budget, focusing on preventive healthcare in the Territory. Our Strategic Plan and Key Performance Indicators reflect these goals.

Accompanying me today are Assistant Commissioner Dr. Nicole Craigwell-Syms; DOH's Acting Chief Financial Officer; Associate Director of the Office of Management & Budget, Colvin Durante; Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources and Labor Relations, Joan Jean-Baptiste; Chief Legal Counsel, Mackiesh Taylor Jones; Chief Procurement Officer, Mahalia Hodge; Deputy Commissioner of Behavioral Health, Renan Steele, and other Department of Health team members present in St. Croix and St. Thomas. I extend my deepest gratitude to our department's leaders and staff for their dedication and commitment to safeguarding our community's health. Special recognition goes to our Employee of the Year recipients, Renise James, Director of Professional Licensure and Kim Christopher, Office Manager of MCH.

With heavy hearts we pause to honor the memory of our beloved colleague Dr. Migdalia G. Brathwaite, the Department's clinic supervisor and behavioral health therapist who will always be remembered for grounding the department and the community through breathing exercises and therapeutic wellness.

The Department of Health serves as the regulatory and public health authority at the state and local levels, as mandated by Virgin Islands Code Titles 3, 19, and 27. Our primary responsibility is providing public health services to Virgin Islands residents, safeguarding and enhancing community well-being through health promotion and preventive initiatives — crucial elements in reducing healthcare costs, especially for chronic illness. The Department oversees thirty operational programs and serves as the lead agency for Emergency Services Function 8 (ESF-8), supervising hospitals during declared emergencies or disasters.

BUDGET AT A GLANCE — FY2027

The Virgin Islands Department of Health enters Fiscal Year 2027 administering four distinct funding streams that together support thirty operational programs across St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John.

The sections that follow walk through each fund, our division, and the major initiative in turn, closing with the Department's active capital construction portfolio and concluding remarks.

- General Fund (Fund 0100): **$31,790,725.00**
- Federal Funds (Fund 3100): **$27,563,462.00**
- Health Revolving Fund (Fund 6079): **$1,500,000.00**
- Non-Appropriated Funds, including the Vital Statistics Corp reimbursement. and Emergency Services: **$538,185.**
- Total federal grant award portfolio of: **$87,542,571**.
- Active capital improvement portfolio managed through the Office of Disaster Recover and the SuperPMO: approximately $370.9 million.

Revenue Cycle Management

DOH Total Revenue Collection	**$1,208,948.00**
Minus EMS Revenue Collection	$446,733.00
Sub-Total	**$762,215.00**
Ja return of 7% of EMS Revenue to DOH	$31,271.31
DOH Actual Revenue as of 6/30/2026	**$793,486.31**

Outstanding Obligations for the past year is $3, 288, 727. 40 and current year amount of $5, 557, 447. 48 for a total of $8, 846, 174. 88.

GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
CURRENT YEAR OUTSTANDING OBLIGATIONS

DEPARTMENT/AGENCY: Virgin Islands Department of Health

Fiscal Year	Vendor's/Emloyee's Name	Total	Funding Source
2026	Bound Tree Medical	$ 1,500.00	*ESSF*
2026	Bella Vista Scott Hotel	$ 7,676.27	*FEDERAL*
2026	Elite Medical Supply	$ 32,651.69	*FEDERAL*
2026	Elaine Co.	$ 133,116.62	*FEDERAL*
2026	Rolling Oakes Lab	$ 28.00	*FEDERAL*
2026	Bella Vista Scott Hotel	$ 7,676.27	*FEDERAL*
2026	Caribbean Screen Printing	$ 46,590.83	*FEDERAL*
2026	Centurion Security Systems	$ 1,654.08	*FEDERAL*
2026	Saint Elizabeth's Hospital	$ 337,428.00	*GF*
2026	Sylmar Health & Rehabilitation Center	$ 276,751.60	*GF*
2026	Neptune Manor	$ 31,000.00	*GF*
2026	Correct Care	$ 705,182.61	*GF*
2026	Devereux Foundation Pennsylvania	$ 99,000.00	*GF*
2026	Jarzofrah Inc	$ 316,570.32	*GF*
2026	Sunrise Community	$ 141,000.00	*GF*
2026	Project Hope	$ 36,600.00	*GF*
2026	Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health	$ 192,000.00	*GF*
2026	Gottlieb's Quickway Service Center	$ 1,672.81	*FEDERAL*
2026	Larkin Community Hospital	$ 1,637,353.44	*GF*
2026	Script Guide RX	$ 8,000.00	*GF*
2026	Script Guide RX	$ 2,402.56	*GF*
2026	Script Guide RX	$ 95,845.24	*GF*
2026	Script Guide RX	$ 8,000.00	*GF*
2026	Script Guide RX	$ 16,000.00	*GF*
2026	Script Guide RX	$ 80,334.61	*GF*
2026	Script Guide RX	$ 8,000.00	*GF*
2026	Script Guide RX	$ 25,491.84	*GF*
2026	Broadband VI, LLC	$ 6,692.00	*HR*
2026	Broadband VI, LLC	$ 6,692.00	*HR*
2026	Broadband VI, LLC	$ 6,692.00	*HR*
2026	Broadband VI, LLC	$ 6,692.00	*HR*
2026	Broadband VI, LLC	$ 6,692.00	*HR*
2026	Broadband VI, LLC	$ 6,692.00	*HR*
2026	Broadband VI, LLC	$ 6,692.00	*HR*
2026	Broadband VI, LLC	$ 6,692.00	*HR*
2026	Broadband VI, LLC	$ 6,692.00	*HR*
2026	First Net	$ 138,889.69	*HR*
2026	One Communications -Virgin Islands Telephone	$ 1,098,303.00	*HR*
2026	Annie Henry	$ 10,500.00	*HR*
	Current Year Total	**$ 5,557,447.48**	

Fiscal Year	Vendor's/Emloyee's Name	Total	Funding Source
2025	Broadband VI, LLC	6,692.00	HR
2025	Broadband VI, LLC	6,692.00	HR
2025	Broadband VI, LLC	6,692.00	HR
2025	Broadband VI, LLC	6,692.00	HR
2025	Broadband VI, LLC	6,692.00	HR
2025	Broadband VI, LLC	6,692.00	HR
2025	Broadband VI, LLC	6,692.00	HR
2025	Broadband VI, LLC	6,692.00	HR
2025	Broadband VI, LLC	6,692.00	HR
2022	Creative Minds	800	FEDERAL
2023	Creative Minds	15,812.00	FEDERAL
2023	Central Air	7,658.50	FEDERAL
2023	SRMC	627.44	FEDERAL
2023	Exotic Sales and Rentals	1,000.00	FEDERAL
2023	P&P	2,195.00	FEDERAL
2024	Central Air	4,840.00	FEDERAL
2024	Creative Minds	6,000.02	FEDERAL
2024	SRMC	1,140.80	FEDERAL
2024	Caribbean Screen Printing	46,590.83	FEDERAL
2024	Rolling Oakes Lab	1,362.00	FEDERAL
2024	Elaine Co.	35,700.00	FEDERAL
2024	P&P	4,310.00	FEDERAL
2024	Centurion Security Sysytems, Inc.	4,956.71	FEDERAL
2025	SRMC	600	FEDERAL
2025	Central Air	5,707.51	FEDERAL
2025	Elaine CO.	110,319.96	FEDERAL
2025	WSW Communications	9,950.00	FEDERAL
2025	Media One	3,000.00	FEDERAL
2025	Mariann Cruse	20,000.00	FEDERAL
2025	Caribbean Screen Printing	46,590.83	FEDERAL
2025	Bella Vista Scott Hotel	1,370.11	FEDERAL
2025	King Christian Hotel	5,000.00	FEDERAL
2025	P&P	11,486.50	FEDERAL
2025	Rolling Oakes Lab	1,072.00	FEDERAL
2025	Centurion Security Sysytems, Inc.	2,634.08	FEDERAL
2024	HealthTech Solutions, LLC (HTS)	12,750.00	UNPAID | ARPA Grant (funds exhausted)
2024	Springline Architects LLC	5,371.50	PMO
2024	Springline Architects LLC	2,635.50	PMO
2024	Springline Architects LLC	36,159.50	PMO
2024	Springline Architects LLC	44,572.00	PMO
2024	Springline Architects LLC	75,939.00	PMO
2024	Springline Architects LLC	82,449.73	PMO
2024	Springline Architects LLC	2,156.50	PMO
2025	HealthTech Solutions, LLC (HTS)	107,750.00	PARTIALLY PAID | Check #97854 | Paid 03/12/2025 | ARPA Grant (shortfall – out of original scope)
2025	HealthTech Solutions, LLC (HTS)	12,750.00	UNPAID | ARPA Grant (budget exceeded)
2025	HealthTech Solutions, LLC (HTS)	12,750.00	UNPAID | ARPA Grant (budget exceeded)
2025	HealthTech Solutions, LLC (HTS)	12,750.00	UNPAID | ARPA Grant (budget exceeded)
2025	HealthTech Solutions, LLC (HTS)	12,750.00	UNPAID | ARPA Grant (budget exceeded)
2025	HealthTech Solutions, LLC (HTS)	12,750.00	UNPAID | ARPA Grant (budget exceeded)
2025	Script Guide RX	112,431.36	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	17,552.98	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	332,947.87	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	257,901.25	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	279,922.38	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	18,547.00	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	349,542.34	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	348,811.87	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	400,045.00	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	8,000.00	GF
2025	Script Guide RX	318,539.33	GF
	Prior Year Total	**3,288,727.40**	
	GRAND TOTAL	**8,846,174.88**	

Office Of Federal Grants Management

The Office administers a diverse federal funding portfolio of 33 core grant projects and 124 single-account budgets, up from 93 single-account grants the previous year. The Department's total federal grant award portfolio currently totals **$87,542,571**, supporting public health programs across multiple federal agencies and fiscal years.

As of June 30, 2026, the Department has expended **$52,040,294**, with an additional **$1,370,053** encumbered. Of the active portfolio, 89 grants are projected to be fully expended during FY2026 and FY2027, while 35 grants reflect lower expenditure rates.

The portfolio continues to evolve as COVID-19 funding phases out: seven COVID-19/ARPA grants concluded in FY2026, while four remaining COVID-19 grants were extended through late FY2027. Managing that transition well, closing out dozens of awards cleanly while growing the overall portfolio, reflects sustained, careful work by our grants management team. The Department continues pursuing competitive federal grants, including proposals to strengthen rural health services, behavioral health mobile crisis response, behavioral health tiny homes and screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment or SBIRT services, representing approximately **$6.2** million in potential new federal investment.

The following identifies new funding opportunities the Department has recently applied for and is awaiting a decision:

- Center for Mental Health Services Projects of Regional and National Significance -$750,000.
- Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment - $995,000.
- To support the Tiny Homes initiative - Fiscal Year 2027 Community Project funding - $4.5 million.

Process Improvement & Organizational Performance

The Process Improvement function supports the Virgin Islands Department of Health's operational effectiveness by transforming departmental data into measurable performance, accountability, and informed decision-making. With 30 operational programs, **307** Full-Time Equivalents, an **$87.07** million federal grant portfolio, and approximately **$370.9** million in active capital investments, the Department requires an enterprise-level framework to assess whether resources, processes, and program activities are producing intended operational outcomes. Process Improvement provides that framework through performance monitoring, Key Performance Indicator (KPI) management, workflow assessment, data analysis, and cross-divisional coordination.

During FY2026, this function continued to strengthen the Department's use of performance data by working across programmatic and administrative divisions to monitor KPIs, identify operational gaps, evaluate trends, and connect program performance to broader departmental priorities.

Bureau Of Human Resources and Labor Relations

As of the current fiscal year, VIDOH employs 307 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs): 143 positions funded through the General Fund and 164 federally funded. Employee classification includes 162 Classified, 144 Exempt, and 2 Part-time employees.

Personnel Movements (FYTD): Separations — 27 total (10 resignations, 16 retirements, 0 dismissals, 1 loss of life). New Hires — 6 individuals onboarded.

Current Vacancies: 38.5 General Fund positions; 17.5 Federal Fund positions.

Strategic Hires were filled to support efficient operations: Chief Nursing Officer (internal promotion); Director of Licensure and Regulatory Boards (lateral/title change); Staff Nurse – Maternal Child Health; Staff Nurse – Community Health.

Office Of Procurement, Contracts Management & Reporting (OPCMR)

During this budget cycle, OPCMR managed the execution and administration of 41 executed contracts, agreements, and interagency agreements with a total value of Eleven Million Four Hundred Seventy Thousand Four Hundred Twenty-Two Dollars **($11,470,422)** in Fiscal Year 2026, increasing to Eleven Million Six Hundred Six Thousand Four Hundred Thirty-Eight Dollars **($11,606,438)** in Fiscal Year 2027.

OPCMR is also actively managing approximately 101 pending Agreements with an estimated value of Twenty-One Million Four Hundred Thirty-Six Thousand Four Hundred Ninety-Eight Dollars **($21,436,498).**

Lease administration remains significant: the Department maintains **33** executed leases **(23 on St. Croix and 10 on St. Thomas).** The Department's executed lease portfolio has a total annual value of One Million Four Hundred Seventy-Four Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Seven Dollars **($1,474,847)** for Fiscal Year 2026, increasing to One Million Five Hundred Four Thousand Three Hundred Ninety-Seven Dollars **($1,504,397)** for Fiscal Year 2027. In addition, OPCMR is actively administering approximately **17 pending leases** Territory-wide with an estimated value of Two Hundred Seventy Thousand Three Hundred Seventeen Dollars **($270,317).**

The division has implemented a comprehensive contract and lease tracking tool to strengthen oversight, improve accountability, and provide real-time visibility into the status of all agreements and leases. The tool enables proactive monitoring of key milestones, including funding, approvals, renewals, and expiration dates, helping ensure timely processing and uninterrupted operational support. The Department continues to adhere to the Government of the Virgin Islands' new **GVIBUY** procurement policies and procedures, ensuring procurement activities are conducted in a transparent, compliant, and efficient manner. Looking to FY2027, OPCMR priorities include reducing pending agreements, executing critical healthcare contracts, strengthening lease compliance, and enhancing procurement oversight and training.

Office Of Legal Counsel / Risk Management — Medical Malpractice

The Medical Malpractice Self-Insurance Retention Program is the Department’s primary financial risk management mechanism. During FY2026, the Program generated **$681,048** in premium revenue. Five malpractice claims were settled year-to-date at a total cost of **$395,000**, with the average settlement rising to **$79,000** per claim — an 11.7% increase over the prior year. While claim frequency declined, rising claim severity continues to pressure the Department’s financial exposure.

The Program is currently managing 70 active malpractice cases through both Contract Legal Services and the Department of Justice, representing a substantial contingent liability for the Government of the Virgin Islands. Our Legal Counsel's office manages this substantial caseload with care for both patients awaiting fair resolution and the Territory's financial exposure. Continued investment in timely claims management will reduce long-term expenditure and improve financial predictability. The office is in the process of collaborating with the Department of Justice, The Medical Board, and Private Physicians, under the support and guidance of the office of Senator Francis. A challenge worth conquering.

Health Primary Care Office (PCO)

During the reporting period, the Primary Care Office successfully expanded and administered the State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), executing 19 provider awards totaling **$725,000** in loan repayment commitments for healthcare professionals serving in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas throughout the Territory. These efforts strengthened provider recruitment and retention, improved access to care, and supported the long-term stability of the Virgin Islands healthcare workforce. The Office also demonstrated strong policy and organizational leadership by leading departmental policy development efforts, facilitating the Clinical Subcommittee on Policies, advancing healthcare protocols, and supporting regulatory compliance initiatives across the Department of Health.

Communicable Diseases

During FY2026, the CDC awarded the Division **$325,052** in supplemental HIV Prevention funding to expand routine testing, PrEP *pre-exposure prophylaxis* access, and community-based prevention. The Virgin Islands AIDS Drug Assistance Program (VIADAP) processed 2,567 prescription claims for 146 clients, totaling approximately **$3.81** million in annual medication expenditures — $3.76 million (99%) for antiretroviral therapy and roughly $39,000 for co-occurring chronic conditions. The Division continues to face rising pharmaceutical costs and declining HIV medication rebate revenue, and continues collaborating with its Pharmacy Benefit Manager, pharmacies, Medicaid, and federal partners to maintain uninterrupted access to medications. Sustaining uninterrupted, lifesaving treatment for every one of these clients through that fiscal pressure is a direct credit to this Division's persistence.

Maternal Child Health Division

The Maternal Child Health/Children with Special Heath Care Needs (CSHCN) Division generated **$19,057** and provided direct clinical services to 1,663 individuals — 938 on St. Croix and 725 on St. Thomas — while extending preventive health education and outreach to more than 5,000 children and families. Federal funding supported completion of the 2025 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (1,508 students across the Territory’s four public high schools) and the School Health Survey under the CDC School-Based Surveillance Grant.

The Division continues strengthening mental and behavioral health support through Virgin Islands Childhood Psychiatry Access Program (VICPAP), Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) home visiting, school-based outreach, Zen Rooms, and youth engagement, and collaborates with the Chronic Disease Division on screening, referrals, and follow-up. Grant funding filled several critical vacancies, including Director, Assistant Director, Registered Nurse, Certified Medical Assistant, and Certified Nursing Assistant positions — a real turnaround for a Division that continues to rebuild its clinical capacity while continuing to reach thousands of families.

Behavioral Health

During FY2025, the Division served **818** individuals through outpatient, residential, forensic, crisis response, substance use, and community-based services. Total annual personnel investment was **$4,481,265** across 35 filled positions — 68% ($3.06 million) from General Funds and 32% ($1.42 million) from federal grants. Five funded vacancies remain unfilled, and seven additional General Fund positions have been eliminated. Our clinical and support staff continue to sustain services for hundreds of Territory residents despite this reduced capacity.

Nearly 75% of consumers were adults age 25–64, and 66.6% of all consumers were served on St. Croix. As of June 1, 2026, 56 individuals required off-island placement for specialized care not consistently available locally, with outstanding provider balances totaling **$4,407,704**. Largest expenditures: Larkin Community Hospital ($1,646,907), Correct Care of South Carolina ($453,581), and Jarzofrah, Inc. ($862,213).

Community Outreach: 176 community wellness encounters; 49 homeless outreach engagements; 37 referrals to Human Services; 45 behavioral health screenings; 6 new clients linked directly into services. This outreach work, often done by a small team meeting people where they are, is some of the most difficult and most necessary work the Division performs.

988 Crisis Response & Lifeline Services: From October 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, the Territory recorded 632 calls, averaging approximately 70 calls per month. These figures demonstrate that residents are utilizing 988 and that the Territory must maintain a reliable, responsive, and culturally appropriate crisis system.

The 988 call-center contract with Protocall Services, Inc. was fully executed on July 30, 2026. The contract provides for the establishment and operation of certified 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline services for the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Emergency Medical Services (OEMS)

The Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) serves as the Department of Health's regulatory authority for emergency medical services throughout the Virgin Islands while administering federally funded initiatives that strengthen emergency preparedness, pediatric emergency care, trauma surveillance, and statewide EMS system performance. The Office currently manages a federal grant portfolio consisting of the Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Grant, funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Highway Safety Grant, funded through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) through the Virgin Islands

Police Department Office of Highway Safety. These federal investments support pediatric emergency preparedness, EMS workforce development, injury surveillance, statewide data reporting through the National Emergency Medical Services Information System (NEMSIS), emergency response training, and community education without increasing reliance on local appropriations.
This work was recognized nationally: the Virgin Islands Office of EMS received the National Association of State EMS Officials' State EMS Office of Excellence Innovation Award for its Emergency Medical Services for Children Disaster Initiative — a distinction earned by very few jurisdictions our size, and one this team should be proud of.

During FY2026, OEMS issued 105 EMS licenses Territory-wide (63 in St. Croix, 42 in St. Thomas/St. John) and inspected three ambulance services including one that operates a helicopter/emergency transport service. The Office transmitted 5,022 patient care reports through NEMSIS, a 74.52% successful transmission rate.

Pursuant to Act No. 8795, the Department is currently reestablishing the Mobile Integrated Health–Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP) Program through legislative funding in the amount of **$1,014,479** under the leadership of Senator Marise C. James. The program development was first initiated on St. Croix; halted with the end COVID funding and now in the process of being rebuilt with expanded services to the St. Thomas–St. John District. The program is designed to strengthen community-based care for residents with chronic conditions and reduce avoidable hospitalizations across the Territory.

Environmental Health and Safety

The Division generated **$498,899** in revenue during the first nine months of FY2026 through health permits ($251,896) and food handler certifications ($247,003) across all three districts. Collections declined compared to the same period in FY2025 resulting from operational and revenue limitations. Reduced staffing levels have constrained the Division's capacity to conduct inspections, process certifications, and carry out other revenue-generating activities at the volume achieved in the prior fiscal year. The reduction of staff has called for collaboration with the respective union and transfer of the St. Croix staff to St. Thomas to ensure visualization of safe food handling practices across the territory. In addition, VIDOH hosts a link available for reporting food safety concerns by patrons of any food handling establishments with a response given by both the epidemiology and environmental health teams.

Vital Records and Statistics

During FY2025–FY2026, VRS recorded 588 births and 515 deaths through June 2026. As of June 2026, the St. Croix district generated **$63,886**, the St. Thomas/ St. John district $18,647 in revenue through Vital Records services (St. Thomas data pending) please note that reconciliation of the numbers is pending. During FY2026, VRS competed for and secured a $300,000 VA-SAMHSA Cooperative Agreement — a notable win that established the U.S. Virgin Islands Suicide Mortality Review Committee and funded two new positions to build a territorial suicide mortality surveillance system where none existed before. The goal is to implement the online processing of both birth and death certificates upon request by the second quarter of fiscal year 2027.

Community Health Clinics

Clinics across St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix continued routine care for adults, with a focus on chronic disease management, collaborating with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors on a territorial strategic plan. Clinics generated **$112,179** in revenue and served over 2,205 clients (666 St. Croix; 962 St. Thomas; 577 St. John) through on-site services and outreach, including National Public Health Week, VIDOH Wellness Fairs, and the St. Croix Agriculture and Food Fair — events our clinic teams show up for year after year to meet residents in their own communities.

Family Planning

Title X funds totaling **$907,087**, supplemented by local funding, supported comprehensive reproductive health services across both districts, staffed by two physicians, two advanced nurse practitioners, a licensed practical nurse, a certified nurse assistant, two certified medical assistants, and five administrative staff. In FY2026, the program generated **$72,931** in program income. Services included contraceptive counseling, pregnancy testing, breast and cervical cancer screening, STD prevention and treatment, infertility services, and preconception health education.

WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program)

For FY2026, WIC is supported by **$6,842,244** in 100% federal funding: **$2,270,528** for Nutrition Services and Administration, **$3,718,127** for supplemental food benefits, **$89,605** for the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program, and **$763,984** through the WIC Modernization Grant. During FY2025, the Program served an average of 2,197 (pregnant women 142; Breastfeeding women 312; non breastfeeding women 59; children 1182; infants 502) participants monthly. The Farmers' Market

Nutrition Program generated $25,405 for local farmers through redemptions by 1,077 participants. Implementation of the WIC Modernization Grant is delayed pending a revised federal proposal, and staffing shortages plus delayed occupancy of the renovated Frederiksted clinic have prevented anticipated cost savings.

One achievement is worth highlighting on its own: the Virgin Islands maintains the nation's highest infant breastfeeding rate, at 69%. That is a direct result of sustained, patient work by our WIC staff and peer counselors, and it is something the entire Department can point to with real pride.

Public Health Preparedness

During FY2026, the Division managed an active federal grant portfolio totaling approximately **$2,808,739** million across four preparedness awards. Overall portfolio execution reached 55%, with individual grant execution rates ranging from 40% to 87%, including one cooperative agreement that achieved a 97% expenditure rate.

Bureau Of Epidemiology

EPI builds capacity across five essential areas: investigating and reporting on cases; surveillance to guide public health action; laboratory services; health information systems; and coordination. Key infectious disease priorities include dengue, Zika, other arboviruses, 18 respiratory viruses (including COVID-19 and influenza), vaccine-preventable diseases, and other reportable diseases.

As of May 14, 2026, the Territory reported 135 confirmed COVID-19 cases over the prior 12 months — relatively low compared to outbreak years — and 230 confirmed influenza cases. All surveillance data is updated in real time on the Data Dashboard at doh.vi.gov. The Division has also been closely monitoring the worldwide Hantavirus and Cyclosporosis outbreaks. We have shared our response plan and are providing education to providers and able to facilitate testing any suspected cases that potentially occur within the territory. The Division of Epidemiology is recognized for their consistency with spending almost 100% of their federal grant funding annually This kind of vigilance is quiet, unglamorous work, and it is precisely why our outbreak numbers stay low. The Division also consistently spends nearly 100% of its federal grant funding annually, reflecting disciplined, effective stewardship of every dollar entrusted to it.

Project Management & Capital Projects

The Project Management & Capital Projects Division (PMO), in collaboration with the Super PMO, leads the Department of Health's healthcare infrastructure modernization program, overseeing an active capital portfolio of approximately **$370.9** million across the U.S. Virgin Islands through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Funds. Major Active Projects Donna M. Christian-Christensen, M.D. Health Center (Formerly Charles Harwood Medical Center) – St. Croix • Total Project Cost: $279.1M • Federal Share: 98% ($273.5M) • Non-Federal Share: 2% ($5.6M) Morris DeCastro Clinic Reconstruction – St. John • Total Project Cost: $17.6M • Federal Share: 98% ($17.2M) • Non-Federal Share: 2% ($352K) Knud Hansen Tower Repairs – St. Thomas • Total Project Cost: $18.3M • Federal Share: 98% ($17.9M) • Non-Federal Share: 2% ($366K) Old Mental Health Temporary Build-Out – St. Thomas • Total Project Cost: $2.04M • Federal Share: 95% ($1.94M) • Non-Federal Share: 5% ($102K) John S. Moorehead Campus Improvements – St. Thomas • Total Project Cost: $4.86M • Federal Share: 98% ($4.76M) • Non-Federal Share: 2% ($97K)

Conclusion

What this testimony reflects, above all, is the work of dedicated people — clinicians, nurses, epidemiologists, procurement officers, grant managers, outreach workers, and administrative staff — who kept essential services running for the people of the Virgin Islands throughout FY2026, often while managing vacancies, aging infrastructure, and rising costs. Their effort deserves to be recognized alongside the numbers in this testimony.

The Department of Health faces a complex financial and operational landscape entering FY2027. While the general fund increase provides some relief, we must address critical staffing shortages, system inefficiencies, and revenue generation challenges to maintain effective public health services.

I thank Honorable Governor Albert Bryan Jr., Honorable Lieutenant Governor Tregenza A. Roach, members of the Cabinet, and members of the 36th Legislature, for your continued support in positioning the Department of Health to continue improving services for our community. To our VIDOH staff, thank you for your strong support throughout the year. The Department of Health remains committed to reducing health risks, increasing access to quality healthcare delivered in a culturally sensitive and equitable manner, and to enforcing health standards.

Chair, this concludes our testimony. Thank you for your continued support. We stand ready to respond to any questions you may have.