

**Virgin Islands Legislature
Committee on Health, Hospitals and Human Services
Honorable Senator Ray Fonseca, Chairman
Wednesday, May 3, 2023**

**Testimony of
Darryl A. Smalls, P.E.
Executive Director
Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team
Virgin Islands Government Hospital and Health Facilities Corporation**

Good morning Honorable Senator Ray Fonseca, Chairman of the Committee on Health, Hospitals and Human Services, Honorable Senators of the Committee on Health, Hospitals and Human Services, other Honorable Senators of the 35th Legislature, Senate Staff, fellow hospital testifiers, and the listening and viewing audience. My name is Darryl A. Smalls, Executive Director of Facilities & Capital Development for the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team (THRT), which I serve under the leadership of Chairman, Christopher E. Finch of the Virgin Islands Government Hospital and Health Facilities Corporation (GHHFC).

Thank you for this opportunity to testify this morning as to the status of the Recovery Efforts as it pertains specifically to the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center on the island of St. Croix. As the Executive Director of the THRT, my primary role is to manage and oversee the planning, programmatic design, final design, bidding, project management, procurement, construction, and project close out for the redevelopment of our Territorial Health Facilities to include the Juan F. Luis Hospital (JFLH), the Roy L. Schneider Hospital (RLSH), the Charlotte

Kimelman Cancer Institute (CKCI) and the Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Center (MKSCHC).

With respect to Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center, I am excited to report that we have successfully achieved several key milestones that have long been in the making. As you have already been apprised, the successful opening and transitioning of patients from JFL into JFL North was the direct result of planning that culminated with the seamless transition that was several years in the making. Many kudos have been shared towards our many dedicated partners, vendors and stakeholders; however, I would like to take this time to personally thank Mr. Charleston “Charles” Creighton of the Virgin Islands Department of Education. I personally reached out to Honorable Commissioner Dionne Wells-Hedrington in early March who without hesitation through Mr. Henry Lloyd, Director of Transportation, provided the requested assistance. Mr. Creighton worked tirelessly alongside the JFL Team after hours, nights, weekends and even in the rain to assist with moving many pieces of medical equipment and supplies. A heartfelt thank you and a debt of gratitude to you “Charles.”

While we have experienced great success thus far, there are four important milestones that remain. First and foremost, we will soon break ground for the construction of the Critical Administration Building which will house critical non-clinical functions for up to twenty personnel to include physician and nursing administration who will directly support JFL North. The Critical Administration building will also serve as the primary entrance to JFL North and will provide connectivity between JFL North and the VICC. We will commence the construction of the foundation within the next two weeks after which we will commence with the erection of the six

thousand five hundred square foot facility. The building is already in production and the long lead component, the elevator, has also been released for fabrication. The building is scheduled to be completed and ready for occupancy by October 2023.

Another key objective is the development and construction of the 5-acre leased lot to the east of JFL North. The development of this lot will provide space for the much-needed parking that is required to support the operations of the interim hospital facility as well as for visitors. Equally important, this lot will house a ten thousand square foot building that will provide relatively close access for Medical Records, Materials Management, and Facilities Maintenance. Our construction plans and specifications are 100% completed and the project will be publicly advertised during the month of May 2023. Construction is slated to be completed by the second quarter of 2024.

Thirdly, and proceeding concurrently with the two previous projects, is the transition of the remaining non-clinical personnel that remain within JFL Main to our leased off-site facility. The retrofitting of this facility has commenced and will be ready for occupancy no later than September 2023. This offsite facility will house all non-clinical support functions such as the Executive Leadership Team, Human Resources, the Business Office, Medical Records, IT, and will provide for the major bulk storage to support Materials Management and Dietary along with other critical hospital supplies.

Fourth and equally significant are the renovations that are required within the VICC. These interim renovations will enable critical functions that presently remain within JFL main that are critical to the operations of JFL North to be safely relocated. These vitally important functions

support direct patient care which were not integrated into the JFL North facility yet are essential to the provision of care. These non-patient functions include:

1. Network Data center
2. Telephone Communications server (VOIP)
3. Television Network Hub
4. Telephone analog Hub (Fax)

The out-patient care functions include:

1. Outpatient Radiology Services
2. Interim JFL North Inpatient/ Outpatient Access (Registration)
3. Outpatient Phlebotomy
4. Physical Therapy
5. Outpatient Diagnostic Cardiology Services

just to name a few.

While these are significantly huge milestones, I would be remised if I did not take this opportunity to state for the record the most important project yet to be undertaken that is not within the functions of JFL North is the demolition and eventual construction of the new state of the art Juan F. Luis Hospital. To date we have cleared the major hurdles to finally arrive at a Fixed Cost Offer from FEMA. No later than Friday May 12, 2023, it is anticipated that the Independent Expert Panel (IEP), which is an entity outside of FEMA, will have completed their review and the project will then proceed to the Large Project Notification (LPN) process which can take up to forty-five (45) days after which we will have received notification that the project has been obligated. Due to the fact this is considered a “mega project,” or one greater than Twenty-Five Million, there are a number of reviewers who must review the overall project in great detail. As this is a large project, Congress will be involved as they too must approve the funding for this

most important project. Once we receive the official Fixed Cost Offer, we will commence immediately with the issuance of a solicitation, specifically a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), to review and establish a pool of qualified respondents who ultimately would be deemed responsive and be eligible to submit a proposal once issued for the construction of the new Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center.

My Team and I along with FEMA and the Office of Disaster Recovery have remained and will continue to remain vigilant throughout this entire process. Similarly, the THRT along with the TBOD and the Executive Leadership Team has forged a transparent and collaborative working relationship to bring to the forefront and address all issues that may arise. As with any construction related projects, we have encountered numerous roadblocks, however my Team and I have continued to work tirelessly and creatively to obtain the required outcomes needed to successfully meet our objectives. While there is still more work to be accomplished, there is no doubt in my mind that, "Together We Will Be Stronger," provided we work collectively towards one objective and that is to construct the most efficient, standardized, resilient, sustainable state of the art healthcare facilities for the people of the Virgin Islands.

As I conclude my presentation, I want to personally thank Ms. Kristen A. Hodge, Recovery Director, JRO-USVI for her continued support of our hospitals and Mrs. Adrienne Williams-Octalien of the Office of Disaster Recovery for her unwavering support as the liaison between the hospitals and FEMA. Equally important I want to thank the Territorial Board, the Executive Leadership of JFLH, the staff of JFLH for their support to the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team and the professionals of the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team.

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This concludes my presentation. I will remain available to answer questions at the appropriate time.