



**35TH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HOSPITALS AND HUMAN SERVICES**

The Honorable Senator Ray Fonseca.
Chair of Committee

Testimony Presented By

The Honorable Justa Encarnacion, RN, BSN, MBA/HCM
Commissioner of Health

on

Bill No. 35-0295 An Act amending title 19 Virgin Islands Code, part III, chapter 29 requiring the Virgin Islands Department of Health to establish and administer the “Virgin Islands Prescription Drug Monitoring Program” to provide prescription drug monitoring, and for other related purposes.

Sponsored by Senator Donna Frett-Gregory.

1 Good day, Honorable Senator Ray Fonseca, Chairperson of the Committee on Health, Hospitals
2 and Human Services; Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, Vice Chair; Committee members,
3 and all non-committee members, and the viewing and listening audience. I am Assistant
4 Commissioner Reuben Molloy of the Virgin Islands of the United States' Department of Health,
5 here in support of and behalf of Justa "Tita" Encarnacion, Commissioner, and present with me
6 today are Chief Medical Officer Tai Hunte Caesar; Deputy Commissioner with oversight of
7 Behavioral Health and Substance Use, Renan Steele. We are here to provide testimony on Bill
8 No. 35-0295 An Act amending title 19 Virgin Islands Code, part III, chapter 29 requiring the
9 Virgin Islands Department of Health to establish and administer the "Virgin Islands Prescription
10 Drug Monitoring Program" to provide prescription drug monitoring, and for other related
11 purposes. Sponsored by Senator Donna Frett-Gregory.

12 Definition:

13 A prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) is an electronic database that tracks
14 controlled substance prescriptions. Information from PDMPs can help clinicians identify
15 patients who may be at risk for overdose and provide potentially lifesaving information
16 and interventions. PDMP data also can be helpful when patient medication history is
17 unavailable and when care transitions to a new clinician.

18 [Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs \(PDMPs\) | Overdose Prevention | CDC](#)

19 Potential Benefits for the US Virgin Islands

20 Implementing a PDMP in the US Virgin Islands could bring several advantages:

21 1. Improved Patient Safety: Healthcare providers would have access to a more
22 complete patient history, enabling better-informed prescribing decisions.

23 2. Opioid Crisis Management: A PDMP could be a valuable tool in addressing
24 opioid misuse, complementing existing efforts like the Opioid Abatement Fund Committee
25 established in 2023.

26 3. Interstate Data Sharing: Once established, the US Virgin Islands' PDMP could
27 potentially connect with PMP InterConnect, a national network that allows sharing of PDMP
28 data across state lines.

1 4. Enhanced Clinical Decision-Making: Prescribers and pharmacists would have
2 access to crucial data at the point of care, improving their ability to identify potential drug
3 interactions or misuse patterns.

4 The VI Department of Health supports Bill No. 35-0295, An Act amending title 19 Virgin
5 Islands Code, part III, chapter 29 requiring the Virgin Islands Department of Health to establish
6 and administer the “Virgin Islands Prescription Drug Monitoring Program” to provide
7 prescription drug monitoring, and for other related purposes. As the US Virgin Islands moves
8 forward with its plans to implement a PDMP, it will be joining a nationwide effort to use data-
9 driven approaches in combating prescription drug abuse while ensuring appropriate access to
10 medications for patients who need them. The Department will continue to communicate and
11 collaborate with the Office of Health Information Technology in implementing PDMP.

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13 In closing, the Department is committed to reducing health risks, increasing access to quality
14 equitable healthcare, and enforcing health standards. Again, thank you for the opportunity to
15 present our thoughts on the establishment and administration of the “Virgin Islands Prescription
16 Drug Monitoring Program at today’s hearing The Department continues collaborative efforts
17 with the members of the 35th Legislature. We stand ready to respond to any questions you may
18 have.