

Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services

**Testimony on Bill No. 35-0119,
*an Act amending Title 19 of the Virgin Islands code by adding a
chapter 7a directing the Department of Health to develop and
approve Mobile integrated healthcare programs***



**Committee on Health, Hospitals & Human Services
Honorable Senator Ray Fonseca, Chairman**

**Presented By:
Lisle A. Evelyn, Jr. MA, NRP
Assistant Director of Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

1 Good day, Honorable Senator Ray Fonseca, Committee on Health,
2 Hospitals and Human Services Chair, all other members, and the
3 listening and viewing audience.

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5 I am Lisle Evelyn, Jr., the Assistant Director of Emergency Medical
6 Services (EMS) for the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical
7 Services. I am here to express our strong support for developing and
8 approving Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) Programs in the Virgin
9 Islands. We believe that MIH programs have the potential to
10 revolutionize healthcare delivery in our community and address
11 critical healthcare needs.

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13 Our islands face unique healthcare challenges, including geographic
14 isolation, limited access to healthcare facilities, and a significant
15 burden of chronic diseases. These challenges disproportionately
16 affect the health and well-being of our residents, particularly those
17 living in underserved and remote areas. Mobile Integrated
18 Healthcare Programs offer a proactive, patient-centered approach to
19 addressing these challenges head-on.

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21 The needs for MIH programs in the Virgin Islands are evident:

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- 23 • **Chronic Disease Management:** Our community struggles with
24 managing chronic diseases, resulting in high hospitalization and
25 readmission rates. MIH programs can provide ongoing care and
26 support to individuals with chronic conditions, reducing
27 hospitalizations and improving their quality of life.

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29 • **Access to Care:** Many of our residents face barriers to
30 healthcare services due to geographic distances and
31 transportation limitations. MIH programs can bring healthcare
32 directly to their homes, ensuring they receive timely and
33 necessary care.

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35 • **Preventive Care:** Preventive care reduces healthcare costs and
36 improves overall health outcomes. To keep our community
37 healthier, MIH programs can focus on preventative measures,
38 including vaccinations, screenings, and health education.

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40 • **Elderly Population:** The Virgin Islands have a growing elderly
41 population that requires specialized care and support. MIH
42 programs can cater to the unique healthcare needs of older
43 adults, promoting their independence and well-being.

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45 • **Mental Health Support:** Mental health conditions often go
46 untreated in our community. MIH programs can incorporate
47 mental health services, offering counseling and crisis
48 intervention to those in need.

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50 The benefits of MIH programs are well-documented and include
51 improved health outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, enhanced
52 access to care, patient-centered services, and positive community
53 impact. By developing and approving MIH programs, we have a
54 unique opportunity to transform healthcare in the Virgin Islands,
55 address healthcare disparities, and create a healthier, more resilient
56 community.

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58 We kindly request your support in advancing legislation and
59 regulatory frameworks that facilitate our region's development and
60 approval of Mobile Integrated Healthcare Programs. By working
61 collaboratively with the VI Department of Health and other
62 stakeholders, a framework can be established that ensures the
63 safety, quality, and effectiveness of these programs while meeting
64 the specific needs of our community.

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66 We are committed to actively participating in developing and
67 implementing MIH programs and working with you to secure the
68 necessary resources and funding to make this initiative successful.

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70 Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We believe that
71 Mobile Integrated Healthcare Programs have the potential to
72 transform healthcare in the Virgin Islands and improve the lives of
73 our residents.

74 This concludes my testimony, and I welcome your questions.