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**35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Committee on Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety
Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**



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**Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services
Lisle A. Evelyn, Jr. MA, NRP
Assistant Director of Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
February 7, 2023
TESTIMONY – EMS Operations**

Good day, Honorable Senator Kenneth Gittens, Committee on Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety Chair, all other members, and the listening and viewing audience.

17 I am Lisle Evelyn, Jr., Assistant Director of Emergency Medical
18 Services with the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services. I
19 am here to provide an update on the EMS integration and operations.

20 **Introduction**

21 EMS systems comprise organizations, individuals, facilities, and
22 equipment whose participation is required to ensure timely and
23 medically appropriate responses to prehospital care and medical
24 transportation requests. The VIFEMS system design determines how
25 resources are structured- operationally, financially, legally, and
26 politically. System design affects virtually every aspect of how
27 requests for services are handled. The system's design should
28 support the primary goals of providing the best clinical and service
29 quality possible with available resources. Because changes to the EMS
30 system design can profoundly affect clinical outcomes, community
31 satisfaction, and cost, community leaders need to understand EMS
32 system design principles and their elements.

33 **VIFEMS-EMS Division Updates**

34 Since Act No. 8545, which established the Virgin Islands Fire and
35 Emergency Medical Services (VIFEMS), was signed by Governor Albert
36 Bryan Jr on April 8th, 2022, we have made remarkable progress in

37 augmenting the EMS division. We obtained the Department of Health's
38 Certificate of Need (CON), DEA Registration, National Provider Identifier
39 (NPI), the V.I. Equicare Provider agreement, a VIFEMS account with the
40 National Registry of EMTs (NREMT), and we have established vendor
41 agreements with reputable EMS suppliers. Furthermore, we welcomed
42 two EMS Chiefs (STT/STJ and STX) and an EMS supervisor (STX), which
43 complemented the medical director and the existing team within the
44 EMS division. To bolster the current ambulance locations, we have
45 positioned an ambulance with Nationally Registered EMS providers in the
46 following areas:

- 47 • The Emile Henderson Fire Station in Frederiksted
- 48 • The Canegata Fire Station in Christiansted
- 49 • At 10C Estate Cottage, Suite 4, St. Croix
- 50 • At Romeo Co. in Coral Bay, St. John
- 51 • The Lima Co. Fire Station in St. Thomas
- 52 • In addition, we have implemented a third ambulance rotation in
53 St. Thomas during high-traffic cruise ship days.

54 **VIFEMS-EMS Personnel and Training**

55 The VIFEMS is comprised of the following EMS providers:

- 56 • **Emergency Medical Responder (EMR):**

57 EMRs have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide essential
58 lifesaving interventions while awaiting additional higher-level EMS
59 resources.

60 VIFEMS Firefighter EMRs are utilized to provide tiered response
61 capabilities in rescue vehicles.

62 • **Emergency Medical Technician (EMT):**

63 VIFEMS EMTs have the fundamental knowledge and skills to
64 provide primary care and safely transport patients experiencing
65 routine medical and life-threatening emergencies.

66 • **Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT):**

67 VIFEMS AEMTs function as part of a comprehensive EMS response
68 under medical oversight and typically as part of an advanced EMS
69 team response with a higher-level provider.

70 • **Paramedic:**

71 A paramedic possesses the complex knowledge and skills
72 necessary to provide care and transportation for emergent
73 patients. VIFEMS Paramedics are assigned to an ambulance and a
74 Quick Response Vehicle (QRV) to respond to emergency 911 calls.

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76 Since 2019, we have implemented scheduled EMS training for our
77 firefighter personnel. We currently have eighty-eight EMS

78 providers within the territory. This number includes a combination
79 of dual-role firefighter EMS providers and single-role EMS
80 providers. In addition, we have maintained a consistent
81 relationship with Raphael O. Wheatley Skill Center for our
82 personnel's EMT training. Finally, we have recently established a
83 relationship with the Howard County Bureau of Education and
84 Training for the paramedic certification of our personnel.

85 **VIFEMS-EMS Workplan**

86 An EMS system's crucial needs are survival, development, growth, and
87 innovation. Therefore, the underpinning of our EMS work plan and goals
88 is to align our system with the 5 Rs of healthcare development: Right
89 Patient, Right Place, Right Time, Right Cost, and Right Quality. The
90 clinical components of our work plan include periodic updates of our
91 treatment policies, Quality Performance Improvement Program,
92 assessing clinical performance improvement effectiveness, key
93 performance indicators, staffing requirements, and enhancing the tiered-
94 response system. The operational components include inter-agency
95 relations, mutual aid, hazard preparation and coordination, operational
96 response planning, triaging service requests, response time standards,
97 and employee safety.

98 **Conclusion**

99 VIFEMS is responsible to the public to ensure that providers are
100 accountable for providing high-quality care. An EMS system is a complex
101 combination of various providers and facilities that provide three
102 essential medical functions: stabilization, evacuation, and redeployment.
103 Although organizational structure and resources vary worldwide, the
104 fundamental components of any EMS system are essentially the same.
105 An efficient and effective service delivery model is the foundation by
106 which innovation, evidence-based clinical practice, and the shift from
107 treating most of our patients in the hospital to treating most of our
108 patients in the prehospital realm will evolve. This change should be a
109 transfiguration by which VIFEMS will trigger itself to become a
110 significant contributor and provider to the USVI healthcare system.
111 This concludes my testimony, and I welcome your questions.

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