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**Your Trusted Experts and Partner in Kidney Care**

**Walter H. Gardiner, MD.**

• Nephrology      • Chronic Kidney Disease Program      • Internal Medicine

July 3, 2025

Honorable Senator Ray Fonseca  
Health, Hospital & Human Services, Chair  
36<sup>th</sup> Legislature US Virgin Islands  
PO Box 1690  
ST. Thomas, VI 00804

Dear Senator Fonseca:

On behalf of HealthQuest, LLC. dba, Caribbean Kidney Center (CKC), I want to extend my gratitude for your tireless efforts and commitment to dialysis patients and our communities. I applaud your efforts and those of the US Virgin Islands Legislature to always find ways to ensure the lives of our most vulnerable are a critical priority.

This letter is in response to your phone call on July 3, 2025, requesting that I submit to your attention a list of resources necessary to reopen CKC St. Thomas through December 31, 2025.

Below is a comprehensive overview of the circumstances that led to the decision to temporarily suspend services at Caribbean Kidney Center St. Thomas, effective Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at 5:00pm.

#### **Overview: CKC Shortage of Qualified Dialysis Clinical Staff**

CKC's policy requires that it hires competent, Licensed Registered Dialysis Nurses and Dialysis Patient Care Technicians to provide direct patient care for its dialysis patients. Unexpected family health emergencies for three (3) of its critical staff members placed immense stress and pressure on the remaining clinical team, and potentially exposing patients to unnecessary risks and contributing to stress and burnout of the remaining care team members. As a result, CKC no longer met the patient/staff ratio necessary to deliver safe treatments.



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Page 2

As the Medical Director, it is my responsibility to ensure that patients and staff are not exposed to unnecessary risks. CKC has been making its best efforts to recruit and retain qualified staff to continue providing quality care, however circumstances have conspired to make all staffing options untenable.

CKC is aware that its decision to temporarily suspend services will have a significant impact on the overall healthcare system in the Territory but believes this action was the most prudent under the circumstances.

Thank you for your support in improving patient access to care. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

Walter H. Gardiner, MD.  
Medical Director & Managing Member

