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Schneider Regional Medical Center Rebuild to Cost Over \$700 Million, May Take Up to 10 Years

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The Schneider Regional Medical Center in St. Thomas, USVI. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

The cost to rebuild the Schneider Regional Medical Center in St. Thomas is expected to be "significantly over" \$700 million, according to Adrienne Octalien-Williams, the director of the V.I. Office of Disaster Recovery. The update was given recently to members of the Public Finance Authority Board of Directors, indicating that the project is moving forward.

[Earlier this year](#), Darryl Smalls, the executive director of facilities and capital development for the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team, informed the Senate Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning that a fixed cost offer for the new hospital's construction would be

finalized by September. Last week, Mrs. Octalien-Williams confirmed to the PFA board that things were indeed on schedule. “We’re just finalizing the fixed cost offer from FEMA,” she explained, adding that some preliminary strategic work had already begun on the architectural aspect of the project.

According to the ODR director, the current plan is to rebuild the hospital around the existing facility using swing spaces to maintain operations. Once the new facility is complete, the existing structure will be taken down. PFA Board Chair Governor Albert Bryan Jr. highlighted the enormity of the project by comparing it to a recent \$40 million waterfront development, which took three years to complete. “So we’re talking 10 times minimum, almost 20 times that amount. That’s why you just need manpower,” he said, stressing [the challenges posed by a labor shortage](#) for such large-scale disaster recovery projects.

ODR is addressing this challenge by working on a strategy to bundle projects and attract larger contractors capable of managing major multimillion-dollar construction projects, according to Octalien-Williams, who noted that the timely completion of the hospital is tied to these contractors' ability to hire sufficient workers. Board member Dorothy Isaacs estimated the project could take up to 10 years from the start of construction to commissioning.

However, Octalien-Williams was optimistic that the timeframe could be shortened to five to seven years, provided that solutions for the manpower shortage are found.