

## Wage Agreement Elevates USVI Nurse Salaries to \$86K-\$118K, Matching U.S. Averages

**Governor Bryan and Chief Negotiator Joss Springette aim to retain local talent by offering competitive wages ranging from \$86,000 to \$118,000 for healthcare professionals**

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A Friday press release from Government House informed the public that a tentative wage agreement had been reached with the union that represents registered nurses at the Department of Health and local hospitals.

Members of the Registered Nurses Leadership Union are employed as assistant head nurses, head nurses, manager administrative care coordinators and clinical care coordinators at Schneider Regional Medical Center, the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center, and the Department of Health.

“Signing this tentative wage agreement underscores our commitment to the healthcare professionals who are the backbone of our medical institutions,” Governor Albert Bryan Jr. said in the statement announcing the agreement. “This agreement is a testament to our dedication to improving healthcare services for all residents of the Virgin Islands.”

The union’s last collective bargaining agreement covered the fiscal years 2016 through 2020. In the tentative wage agreement, reached four years after the expiration of the previous CBA, the parties have agreed to resolve the gap between agreements by waiving wage negotiations for fiscal years 2021 through 2021. The new collective bargaining agreement that will be finalized will be effective from FY 2023 to 2026.

According to the tentative agreement, at the Department of Health, salaries will range from \$86,000 for the most junior assistant head nurse, up to \$113,000 for the most senior clinical care coordinator with over 20 years of experience. At the hospitals, the salary range is slightly higher beginning at \$88,000 to \$118,000 annually, according to the new agreement, seen [here](#). If a nurse has board certification from the American Nurses Credentialing Center, the salary increases by an additional \$2000 to an employer’s base salary.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2023 the average wage for registered nurses across the country was \$94,480.

The new agreement lays out a salary scale that is much closer to the national average, said both Governor Bryan and Joss Springette, the government’s chief negotiator. They hope that the increased salaries will help to stem the outflow of highly skilled nursing professionals seeking better pay and improved working conditions on the mainland. The tentative agreement is a “crucial step toward addressing staffing shortages that have long burdened our healthcare system,” Governor Bryan said, while Ms. Springette hoped that the agreement would “bring some needed relief to those who are carrying a heavier load because of the staffing shortages.”

The agreement was ratified by Territorial Hospital Facilities Board Chairman Christopher F. Finch, and approved by Governor Bryan.

### **Correction: May 19th, 2024**

*An earlier version of this story incorrectly reported that the agreement was pending ratification by Territorial Hospital Facilities Board Chairman Christopher F. Finch and approval by the governor. In fact, both individuals have already signed and approved the agreement. The story has been updated to correct this information.*