

logo not found or type unknown

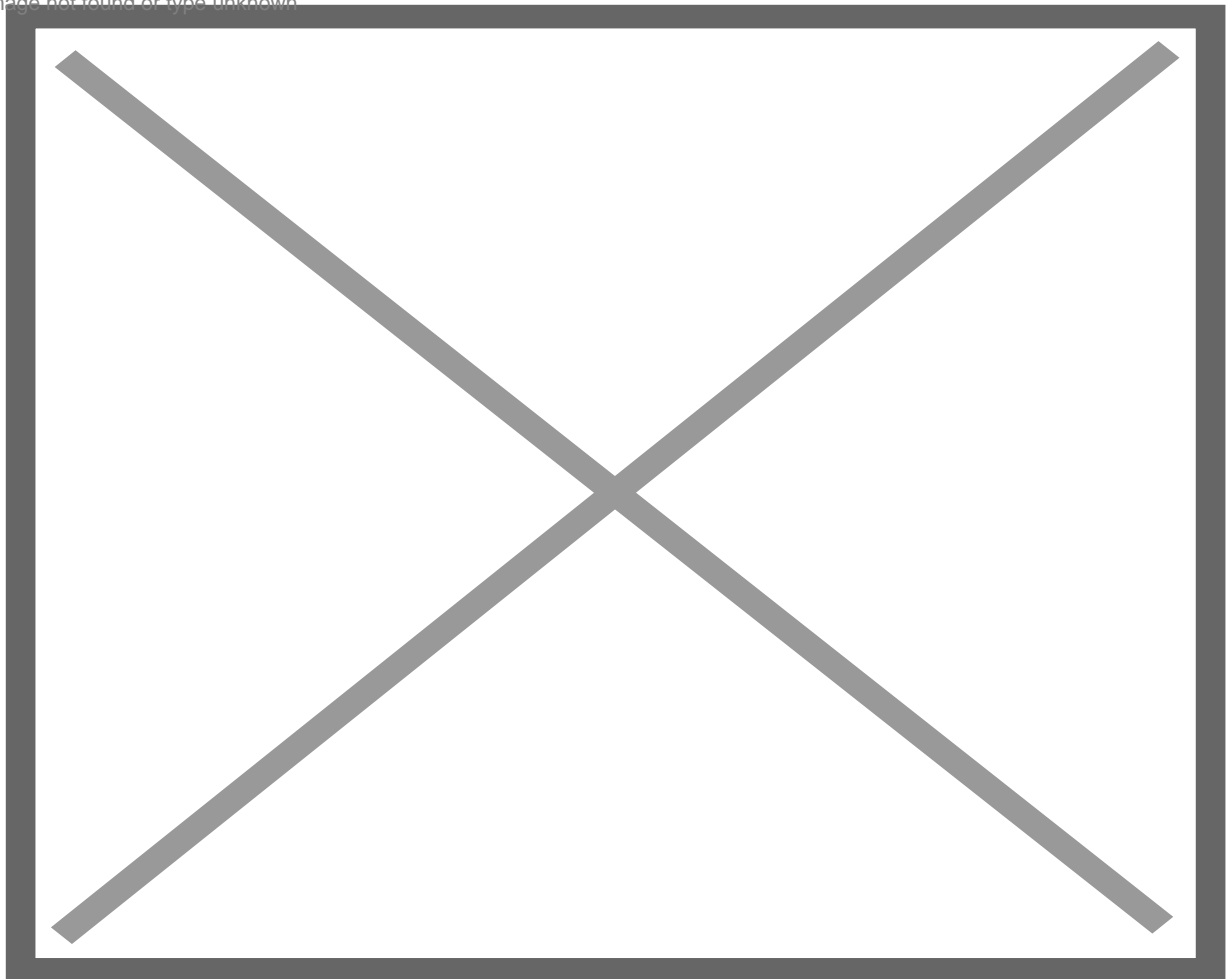
Bryan Acknowledges Pafford's Departure, Says GVI Could Not Sustain "Financial Burden Forever"

With federal funds depleted, the USVI government struggles to cover nearly \$10 million in unpaid invoices, leading to the end of Pafford Medical Services' operations in the territory

Health / **Published On August 07, 2024 08:37 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **August 07, 2024**

Image not found or type unknown



The Bryan administration on Wednesday night issued a statement on Pafford Medical Services' departure from the U.S. Virgin Islands, revealing that with post-hurricane and Covid relief funds from the federal government depleted, the local government can no longer bear to pay.

"The funding for Pafford's services was supported by federal funds, which have since been exhausted. With the cessation of this federal support, the financial burden has now shifted to the Government of the Virgin Islands' local funding, which is not able to sustain these elevated costs on a permanent basis," Government House said.

[Earlier today](#), Pafford confirmed to the Consortium that effective immediately, all its personnel had begun departing the USVI. The decision, which Pafford described as extremely difficult, was made following incessant attempts to collect payments totaling nearly \$10 million from the local government for services provided to the USVI.

Since its response to assist the USVI following Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, Pafford said it has been dedicated to offering medical services, ensuring the health and well-being of the community. Medical professionals included physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, paramedics, and other ancillary staff, who Pafford said have worked tirelessly to uphold the highest standards of healthcare, often going above and beyond to meet the needs of the USVI community.

Several government departments and agencies will lose medical staff, including the V.I. Department of Health, the Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center, V.I. Fire EMS, and the Bureau of Corrections.

Government House said its arrangement with Pafford "was always intended as a temporary measure to manage the heightened demands of an unprecedented weather-related disaster and global health crisis. As the territory progresses in the hurricane recovery and response effort and transitions further out of the Covid-19 emergency, we now have to make deliberate efforts to shape the landscape of our immediate and future healthcare needs."

The impact of the company's departure will be felt across the territory as Pafford managed many critical health services in the USVI. This includes ambulance emergency response paramedics, whose absence could severely affect the territory's healthcare sector. For instance, Pafford employees responded to medical emergencies on cruise ships. Additionally, Pafford provided services to several hundred dialysis patients in the territory, and their departure could be a matter of life and death for these patients.

Government House said the GVI and the agencies that utilized Pafford's services "have established comprehensive contingency plans and/or separate contractual agreements with Pafford to ensure the continuity of emergency medical services. These plans are in place to prevent any disruption in services during this transitional period."

The statement added, "In the future, just like any other medical provider, Pafford Medical Services will be considered for contract as needed, based on the availability of funds. Their role is similar to that of a locum used at hospitals, providing essential services on a flexible basis as required."

Regarding the nearly \$10 million debt, the GVI "is working to address the arrears owed to Pafford and is committed to responsibly resolving all financial obligations," reads the statement.

The administration expressed gratitude to Pafford for its services over the years. "We are grateful to Pafford Medical Services and their staff for their service during a critical time and extend our deepest appreciation to Pafford and their dedicated team for their exceptional service. Their efforts were instrumental in maintaining the safety and health of our community during a critical time of need."

The administration stated that the transition "will be handled with the utmost efficiency to ensure minimal impact on the delivery of emergency services. The commitment to the health and safety of all Virgin Islanders remains steadfast during this period of transition and into the future."