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## **Ponce Health Sciences University to Launch First Medical School in British Virgin Islands**

**Ponce Health Sciences University announces the opening of its first medical school in the BVI, set to enroll 50 students in its inaugural class in August 2025, with plans to increase capacity and offer full scholarships to local students.**

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**Ponce Health Sciences University in St. Louis, Missouri.**

Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) has announced the expansion of its educational presence in the Caribbean with the establishment of a new School of Medicine in Tortola, British Virgin Islands. This development marks the first medical school in the BVI and PHSU's fourth location.

The inaugural class, scheduled for August 2025, will enroll 50 students, with plans to expand intake to 75 students in Fall 2026. In addition, PHSU has committed to awarding two full scholarships annually to eligible students from the BVI, providing local talent the opportunity to pursue a medical degree within their home territory.

Dr. Gino Natalicchio, president of Ponce Health Sciences University, expressed his enthusiasm for the new venture, stating, “Opening this location in Tortola will make a major difference to students in BVI, Puerto Rico, the Caribbean region, and worldwide because it gives them a truly viable and accessible option to complete their studies in medicine.” Dr. Natalicchio emphasized the importance of the new school in connecting health sciences students with opportunities and experiences that will help them achieve their goals.

BVI Premier Natalio Wheatley welcomed the establishment of the medical school, pointing to its potential impact on both health standards and the local economy. “The school will bring a recurring influx of students who will live in the BVI, buy goods, and spend in our businesses. I am optimistic that Virgin Islanders will welcome them and develop services for this new kind of resident,” he said.

The new PHSU School of Medicine will operate from the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College in Tortola. The program has already received provisional accreditation from the Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine (ACCM) and a provisional license from the Higher Education Licensing Board under the Virgin Islands Ministry of Education.

PHSU, with over 45 years of experience in the health sciences sector, currently offers degrees in clinical psychology, biomedical sciences, medical sciences, public health, and nursing. Across its locations, the university supports nearly 2,140 active students with over 1,000 professional faculty members. The institution's track record includes an impressive 100% graduation rate in its public health programs and a 96% medical residency match rate at its Puerto Rico campus.

PHSU's research contributions include an average of 50 articles annually in prominent peer-reviewed journals, demonstrating its commitment to advancing healthcare knowledge.