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USVI Reaches Healthcare Milestone with New Data Exchange Partnership

In partnership with CRISP Shared Services, the territory's new Health Information Exchange promises enhanced patient care and seamless provider coordination

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Government House announced on Friday that the U.S. Virgin Islands has reached a milestone in its pursuit of an integrated healthcare system with the signing of an agreement with CRISP Shared Services (CSS), a nonprofit organization specializing in health infrastructure and data exchange technology.

According to the Bryan administration, the partnership will launch a Health Information Exchange (HIE) in the territory, aimed at improving patient care, enhancing data accessibility, and ensuring better coordination between healthcare providers.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. stressed the importance of this development in transforming the territory's fragmented healthcare system. "In an era of rapid change and achievements in healthcare around the world, the USVI is still seeing far too many fall through the cracks of a decentralized, disconnected system," he stated. According to Bryan, the new HIE will provide the data exchange infrastructure needed to support equitable health outcomes for all Virgin Islanders.

The journey toward an integrated healthcare network began in 2021, when the Bryan administration established the [Office of Health Information Technology \(OHIT\)](#). Under the leadership of OHIT Director Michelle Francis, the office has worked diligently to develop interoperable health IT systems, promote digital health services, and train local providers on modern health IT practices, according to Gov't House. In collaboration with CSS, OHIT has made significant strides toward a system that allows healthcare providers to securely share and access patient information.

The administration said the new HIE, powered by CSS, will address the long-standing issue of patient information being locked in various silos. This system will enable agencies such as the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, hospitals, and private providers to exchange patient data securely, ensuring that providers have the information needed to deliver timely, coordinated care. The HIE introduces tools like a Master Patient Index to unify patient identities across systems and an integration engine to retrieve critical information such as lab results and medication records.

In addition to these core capabilities, CSS's platform will provide encounter notifications, offering real-time updates on patient admissions, discharges, lab results, and more, stated the release. These tools will support both daily healthcare delivery and responses to major public health crises, helping the Virgin Islands better manage resources and improve care outcomes.

OHIT Director Michelle Francis expressed enthusiasm about the progress made. "I couldn't be more thrilled to lead this office and play a role in bringing this much-needed, long-sought infrastructure to fruition," she said. Francis highlighted the collaborative efforts with Medicaid Director Gary Smith and other local healthcare providers to secure funding and establish a strong technical foundation for data exchange.

Government House said HIE's potential extends beyond immediate healthcare needs, promising to play a critical role in public health responses and long-term healthcare cost management. OHIT is also working on a Health Data Utility, a public-private governance model to ensure transparent, accountable use of health data in the Virgin Islands. More details on this framework are expected in the coming months.

The initiative has garnered interest from other U.S. territories, including Guam, whose governor, Lourdes Guerrero, has expressed interest in similar health projects, according to Government House.

To introduce the HIE to healthcare providers and the public, OHIT will host the 3rd Annual Digital Health Summit from November 18-20, 2024, at The Westin Frenchman's Reef on St. Thomas. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with the CSS technology team, learn about the HIE's implementation timeline, and explore onboarding processes. Registration is free and available on OHIT's [website](#).