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Schneider Hospital Confirms One Person Quarantined, Says Hospital is Prepared for Coronavirus

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Robert Moore **March 14, 2020**

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Schneider Regional Medical Center

ST. THOMAS — Schneider Regional Medical Center (SRMC) Interim CEO Dr. Luis Amaro and his top aides on Friday assured Virgin Islanders that the hospital is prepared for the emergence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the territory.

"Despite the wealth of information provided by all mediums, including the Government of the Virgin Islands and the Department of Health, SRMC continues to receive many questions and concerns from the community about the hospital's state of readiness" to test and treat patients suspected of having or confirmed to have COVID-19," Dr. Amaro said.

"Response protocols are in place. Hospital staff have undergone training, participated in mock events at both Schneider hospital on St. Thomas and the Myra Keating [facility in St. John] have been put in place. We have run COVID-19 training practices and mock practices at Roy Lester Schneider on Wednesday and Myrah Keating Community Health Center on St. John," said Dr. Amaro.

Six isolation, negative pressure rooms — used to isolate patients to prevent cross-contamination from room to room — are available for use. "In the emergency room, we also have quarantine areas for people that present with symptoms that we will initiate under the Persons Under Investigation protocol," according to Dr. Amaro.

Vice President of Facilities Daryl Smalls said the hospital is preparing a currently unoccupied floor for quarantine use, if necessary. "We are increasing the negative pressure of air in that area," Mr. Smalls said. Around 10 patients under investigation may be able to be housed in that expanded quarantine area, he said

One "Person Under Investigation" because of potential symptoms of COVID-19 is currently quarantined at SMRC, Dr. Amaro said, adding that the public should be comforted by the news. "You want to be able see that your hospitals and health agencies have individuals under investigation. That will allow you to know we are doing our due diligence to investigate and identify individuals that could possibly be positive."

Patient, Staff and Visitor Protection

SRMC began identifying the need for protective equipment for staff "some time ago," Dr. Amaro said. "We have deemed that we have adequate supplies and equipment for our staff as well as supplies dedicated for our patients that are coming in. We have orders out to continue to receive equipment."

Delphine Olivacce, vice president of Quality and Performance Improvement, said adequate supplies of protection wear is available to staff, patients and visitors who might come to visit a family member who is in isolation.

"We go by the Centers for Disease Control recommendations for personal protective equipment related to COVID-19 or any other infectious disease," she said. That equipment includes a minimum of N-95 masks, face shields, goggles, gloves and impermeable gowns, head covers and shoe covers.

Several hours after the press briefing, Department of Health officials [announced the first confirmed case](#) of COVID-19 in the territory. That patient is believed to be on St. Croix, but no specific information about the patient was provided, in order to protect the person's privacy.

"It is important to keep in mind," Dr. Amaro said, "that the majority of COVID-19 cases are not severe and only a small percentage of patients will require hospitalization. The majority of patients will be able to recover at home."