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DOH Promotes Mental Wellness With Art Therapy, Zumba

As part of May's mental health awareness initiatives, Department of Health officials provide meals, screenings, and information on care access, committing to support the territory's vulnerable homeless community exactly where they are.

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The V.I. Department of Health is observing Mental Health Awareness Month this May with several outreach activities across the territory.

Members of the Behavioral Health division will hit the road with their “Zen Van”, which provides mobile access to mental health counselling and resources. The van will visit junior high and high schools, said DOH officials.

“Through this month's activities, we are reminding the community that it's okay to ask for help and that support is available,” said Deputy Commissioner for Behavioral Health Renan Steele. “Our goal is to reduce stigma, to promote open conversations, and expand access to support and treatment,” he continued.

Team members will also engage with members of the homeless population, providing meals, health screenings and information about how to access care services. “We are committed to meeting people where they are,” Mr. Steele declared.

The month will also feature a series of community engagement events focused on helping Virgin Islands better manage their mental health, including Zumba and art therapy sessions, a panel discussion, and mental health awareness walks on both St. Croix and St. Thomas.

“I encourage everyone to take part, learn more about the services we offer, and make mental well-being a personal priority,” said Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion. “Whether dealing with anxiety, depression, grief, stress or trauma, it's important to know that you are not alone, and that help is available.”