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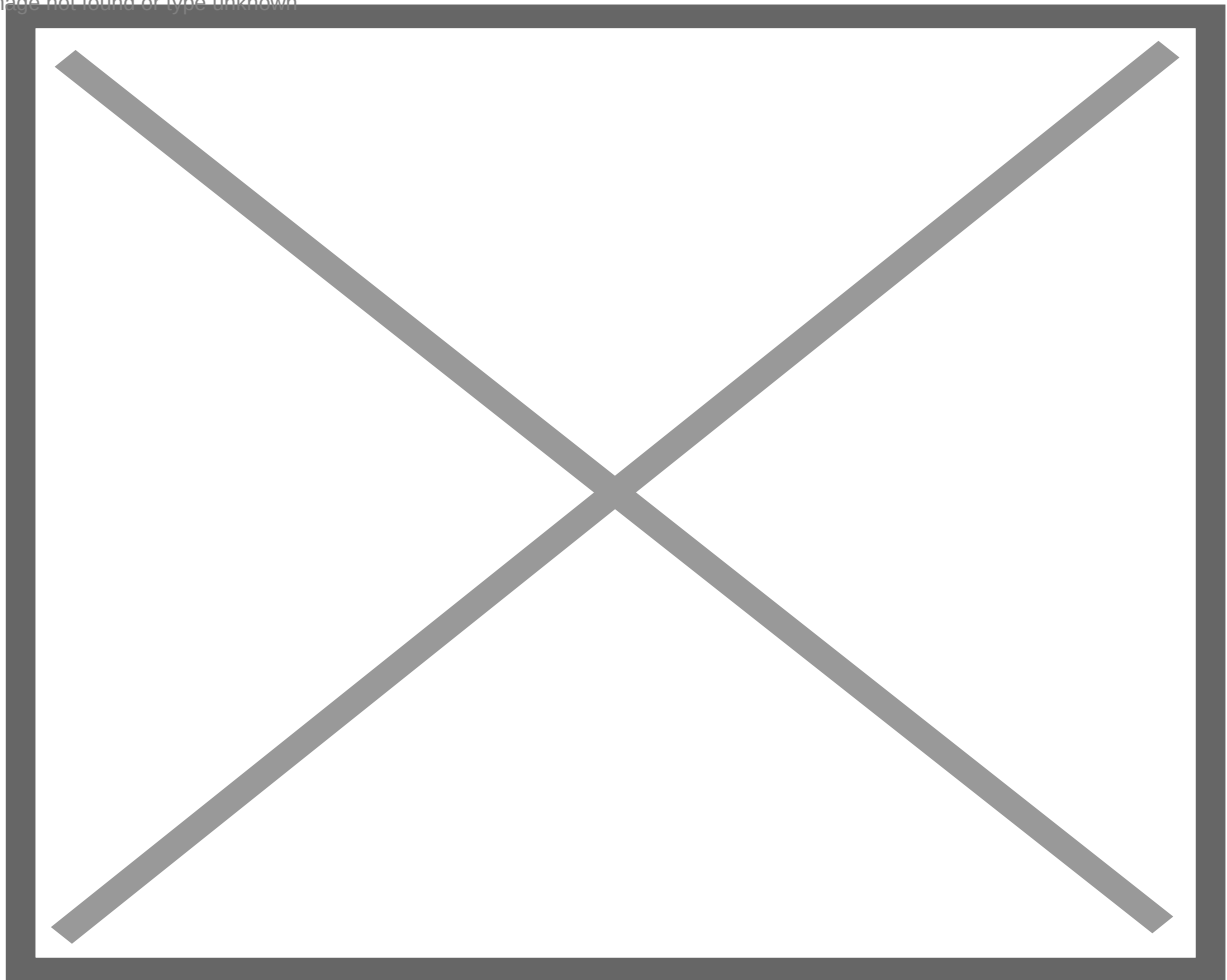
JFL CEO Darlene Baptiste Shares Her Vision and Challenges in First 3 Months on the Job

On Live with Laura, Baptiste spoke candidly about rebuilding trust in the hospital, restoring electronic systems after a cyberattack, and embracing community feedback while leading nearly 600 employees through one of JFL's most challenging chapters.

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JFL CEO Darlene Baptiste. By. WOMEN IN BUSINESS VI & CARIBBEAN INC.

ST. CROIX — In a candid and inspiring conversation aired Sunday on the Live with Laura show, Juan F. Luis Hospital CEO Darlene Baptiste reflected on her personal journey through the healthcare industry, the challenges currently facing St. Croix's main medical facility, and her vision for restoring public trust and delivering quality care.

Appearing as one of four women in leadership featured on the program hosted by Laura Forbes and broadcast on Consortium platforms, Ms. Baptiste emphasized the importance of collective action in achieving community healthcare goals.

Having assumed leadership of JFL just over three months ago, Ms. Baptiste says she remains “still excited” about what she describes as a “wonderful opportunity,” despite the significant challenges confronting her and the nearly 600 employees under her charge. She characterized the hospital staff as “a group of hard working persons who really carry that institution in their heart,” while acknowledging that the hospital’s reputation needs repair. “I mean, in all essence, it’s true,” Ms. Baptiste admitted. Her primary goal now, she says, is “providing that optimum care and winning back the trust and the confidence of the community.”

Among the immediate hurdles is the hospital’s ongoing effort to return to its electronic systems following a recent data security breach that forced operations back to paper-based methods. Financial concerns also persist. While the V.I. Legislature’s recent cash infusion offered some relief, it remains a short-term solution. “That’s only like, one small piece,” the CEO noted.

Ms. Forbes observed that navigating these simultaneous challenges while adjusting to the new leadership role must be stressful. Ms. Baptiste credited hope, faith, and a servant leadership philosophy as her anchor. “At the end of the day, hold fast to truth, accountability, transparency, and we will get through,” she said.

Engaging with the public is also a key part of Ms. Baptiste’s leadership approach. “I go to the grocery store and I actually have to add time...because persons want to stop and ask questions or talk, and I’m open and receptive,” she shared. “That’s how we learn and we grow – by hearing those things that we may not see ourselves.”

As the conversation turned to personal growth and perseverance, Ms. Baptiste offered words of encouragement to those facing uncertainty or adversity: “We have very strong roots in the Virgin Islands...we have strong heritage. Hold fast to that and be part of the solution.”