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USVI Hospital Officials Tour Top Florida Facilities to Guide Healthcare Overhaul at Home

Hospital officials from the Virgin Islands toured top-ranked facilities in Florida, including AdventHealth Orlando, to gather insights on patient care, data systems, leadership models, and clinical integration to inform reforms across the territory.

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The V.I. Government Hospital and Health Facilities Corporation (GHHFC) has wrapped up an exploratory mission to Florida's leading healthcare systems, concluding a series of site visits that officials say will play a key role in reshaping the delivery of hospital services across the U.S. Virgin Islands.

From July 27 through July 31, 2025, the GHHFC delegation engaged in a strategic fact-finding tour of top-performing hospitals in Orlando and Miami, according to a release issued this week. The visits were timed alongside the release of the 2025–2026 U.S. News & World Report hospital rankings, which underscored the high-performing nature of the facilities selected for the mission.

The delegation—led by GHHFC Chairman Dr. Jerry R. Smith—included key stakeholders from both healthcare and territorial government leadership. Among them were GHHFC Treasurer and Office of Management and Budget Director Julio Rhymer, GHHFC Secretary Christopher Finch, St. Croix Physician Representative Dr. Albert Titus, St. Croix Nurse Representative Faye John-Baptiste, Office of Health Information Technology Director Michelle Francis, and Executive Director of the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team, Darryl Smalls.

During the five-day mission, the team toured and held meetings with leadership and clinical staff at three of the most nationally acclaimed health systems in Florida: AdventHealth Orlando, Orlando Health, and Baptist Health South Florida. These institutions, known for their commitment to organizational excellence and patient-centered care, provided the GHHFC team with valuable insights into modern health system operations.

AdventHealth Orlando stood out as the only hospital in Florida to make the U.S. News & World Report's national Honor Roll of Best Hospitals, ranking among the top 20 hospitals in the United States. The hospital also secured the #1 position in Florida and the Orlando metro area, with national rankings in 11 adult specialties and 3 pediatric specialties. It was also rated “High Performing” in 22 adult procedures and conditions.

Orlando Health and Baptist Health South Florida were also highlighted in the rankings, earning top-tier placements both statewide and nationally for excellence across multiple service lines and facilities.

Across all three site visits, recurring themes emerged that GHHFC officials intend to incorporate into their ongoing reform efforts. These included:

- A strong emphasis on patient experience and continuity of care
- Clear mission alignment, culture-building, and vision-driven leadership
- Integrated systems and interdisciplinary collaboration
- Physician-led and data-informed governance models
- Standardized clinical, technological, and administrative practices across the organization
- Investments in high-quality data infrastructure and modern Electronic Medical Records (EMR) systems
- Cross-sector and cross-specialty partnerships to enhance coordinated care

- A forward-thinking mindset embracing long-term innovation, even when immediate implementation may be challenging

“This mission offered a front-row view into what is working at some of the highest-performing health systems in the nation,” said Dr. Smith. “These institutions are not only delivering excellent clinical outcomes—they are doing so through thoughtful design, empowered staff, and a clear commitment to the patient journey. These lessons are essential as we work to elevate healthcare for all Virgin Islanders.”

Moving forward, GHHFC plans to use the findings from this mission to shape its strategic planning, inform future investments, and implement policy and operational reforms. The goal, officials say, is to unify hospital services, improve patient outcomes, and ensure a consistent, high-quality healthcare experience across the territory.