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Schneider Hospital Warns Cost of Violence Is Draining Hospital Resources Amid \$36.2M in Unpaid Care

Gun violence, stabbings, domestic abuse, and motor vehicle accidents are costing SRMC millions in uncompensated care, with many victims uninsured. Lawmakers urge quantifying the true cost as unpaid bills for FY2026 are projected at \$36.2 million.

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Ambulance at the scene of a homicide in the USVI.

Shooting incidents, vehicular accidents, and other acts of violence are placing immense pressure on the Schneider Regional Medical Center, a facility already grappling with increased supply costs and mounting uncompensated care.

During the hospital's budget hearing before lawmakers this week, SRMC Chief Executive Officer Tina Commissiong discussed the "cost of gun violence" in response to an inquiry from Senator Kurt Vialet.

According to Ms. Commissiong, "it really is significant." She reminded the committee that a lot of times the gunshots happen after regular business hours. Surgeons, anesthesiologists and other key staff must then be called in to attend to the injured party or parties. Blood products, often needed during these sorts of incidents, are "very expensive."

Ms. Commissiong stopped short of quantifying the amount spent on gunshot victims as being in the millions, but noted that "it probably is very close." She told Mr. Vialet that off-island flights for additional care cost \$30,000 each. "It's more frequent than any of us would like to see," CEO Commissiong lamented.

Having listened to Ms. Commissiong's lengthy testimony on SRMC's need for more cash, Senator Vialet wondered whether the hospital can "recapture" any of the charges in cases of gun violence. The answer was not favorable.

"Frequently, those patients are uninsured, don't have the ability to pay, and we do follow the bills, but it tends to fall into uncompensated care," Ms. Commissiong explained. Earlier, she provided a detailed recounting of the care given to a March 2024 shooting victim. She testified that the individual was "treated for multiple fractures, tibia, humerus, knee, etc; received multiple blood transfusions to sustain their life." Their care totaled \$39,740, but as an uninsured patient, SRMC has "collected \$0" over a year later.

Senator Vialet has argued that gun violence in the Virgin Islands is "destroying the hospitals." He asserted that it's one of the reasons why the territory is "literally struggling now."

Committee chair Senator Novelle Francis, acknowledged that guns are not the only issue. "You have stabbings, you have domestic violence. That's also associated with it," he said. He suggested that these incidents be included in calculating the cost of uncompensated care. "You were a little hesitant to say a million for gunshot victims, but we have so many other [victims of] violence that also end up at the hospital," he told Ms. Commissiong. A "tremendous" number of motor vehicle accidents, too, "probably add to this uncompensated care," Mr. Francis observed.

Senator Francis has encouraged SRMC to collaborate with local partners, such as the University of the Virgin Islands, to quantify the "true cost" of uncompensated care. Uncompensated care [estimates for FY2026 are \\$36.2 million](#), a figure that Ms. Commissiong assured is not "dramatized" or "excessive."