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New Fly the Whale Partnership Ends Travel Costs for St. Croix Veterans Seeking Care in Puerto Rico

Veterans on St. Croix traveling to Puerto Rico for medical appointments will no longer face airfare expenses, as VA Director Patrick Farrell and Government House hailed the initiative as a long-promised step toward better healthcare access.

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The V.I. Department of Veterans Affairs has partnered with Fly the Whale Airlines to eliminate the need for non-service connected veterans to pay out of pocket when traveling to VA appointments in Puerto Rico. As announced by Government House Communications Director Richard Motta on Monday, “better access to VA medical care for our veterans” has long been a priority for the territorial VA office.

Those wishing to utilize the service must first receive a medical appointment from the VA clinic on St. Croix. Written confirmation of that appointment must then be presented to the Office of Veterans Affairs. The VA office will then process travel arrangements for the veteran needing care and a travel companion if required due to the veteran's medical condition.

“Veterans are encouraged to present their appointments as soon as they receive them,” urged Mr. Motta, as transportation “will still be subject to availability on the airline on any one particular day.”

While the service is currently only available for veterans residing on St. Croix, Mr. Motta says that VA Director Patrick Farrell is “hoping to be able to do the same for the veterans residing on the St. Thomas-St. John islands district in the near future.”

Mr. Motta extended congratulations to Fly the Whale “for being such a good corporate citizen.”