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Color, Music and Purpose Mark St. Croix Cancer Awareness Walk in Frederiksted

The DOH's annual walk blended Caribbean music and community spirit as participants raised awareness for breast and prostate cancer. Health leaders stressed early screening and prevention while pledging continued support across the territory.

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Hundreds sing, dance, and march through the streets of Frederiksted during the Department of Health's Breast and Prostate Cancer Awareness Walk on Oct. 24, 2025. By. DEAR PRODUCTIONS.

ST. CROIX — The streets of Frederiksted were alive with color, rhythm, and purpose on Friday, October 25, as hundreds of residents joined the V.I. Department of Health's Breast and Prostate

Cancer Awareness Walk. The event began at the Claude O. Markoe School at 5:30 p.m. and ended at Buddhoe Park, drawing an estimated 200 participants who danced to Caribbean music while spreading awareness about two of the territory's most diagnosed diseases.

"It was a collaborative effort where different divisions came together, and we walked for a purpose," said Tamara Ramos, territorial coordinator for the Division of Behavioral Health.

Ramos said the event felt like a celebration as much as a campaign, with the energy of the crowd reflecting both hope and determination. "It was more of a fete, getting you ready for Carnival," she added, smiling.

From a public health standpoint, the walk was about more than awareness. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Janis Valmond emphasized that the Department of Health aims to bring health directly into the community. "We love to take health to where people work, play, eat, and do everything else," she said. "The concept of doing these types of walks is to raise awareness, to show support, and to continue to let the community know that the Department of Health is here to support, to work with everyone, to better everyone's life."

Assistant Commissioner Reuben Molloy explained that prostate and breast cancer are the leading cancer diagnoses in the Virgin Islands, making prevention and early detection critical. "The Department of Health is in the business of prevention," Molloy said. "Once you bring awareness to folks, the message is early testing so you can engage in activities or whatever measures you need to engage in to prevent."

He underscored that while the probability of prostate cancer increases for men over a certain age, early detection can be lifesaving. "Even if you get it, if caught early, it's not a death sentence," Molloy said. He encouraged men to overcome their reluctance to screening. "Get the PSA," he advised, referring to the prostate-specific antigen test. "And I know men don't like to hear about the digital exam, but the combination of both will save your life. A couple seconds of discomfort could mean the difference between life and death."

Deputy Commissioner Valmond said walks are being held across the territory to reinforce the message. "There was a similar event in St. Thomas last week Friday, and we'll be doing one on St. John next Thursday, October 30," she said.

The Department of Health's statistics confirm why these awareness campaigns matter. Breast and prostate cancers are the two most frequently diagnosed cancers in the Virgin Islands, a reality that health officials say requires sustained education and engagement.

"We thank everyone who came out to support," Valmond said, noting the broad community participation that made the event possible. "All are important," she added, "but that is why we push these two the most."