

JFL and Schneider Confirm Workforce Reductions as Hospitals Target 10% Cut in Personnel Costs

Hospital leaders confirmed a two-phase workforce reduction plan aimed at cutting personnel expenses by 10 percent at JFL and SRMC, beginning with position consolidation, job sharing and vacant-post reviews before any employee separations are considered.

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Janeke Simon **July 22, 2026**

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The Juan F. Luis Hospital and the Schneider Regional Medical Center. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

The territory's two public hospitals will move forward with a phased workforce reduction plan intended to cut personnel expenses by 10 percent at both facilities, beginning with position consolidation, resource sharing and a review of vacant posts before management considers

employee separations.

Representatives of seven labor organizations met Tuesday with officials from the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Schneider Regional Medical Center to discuss the planned “optimization” of staffing across the public healthcare system.

The unions represented nurses, physicians, security guards and other hospital employees, according to a release issued by JFL.

Hospital officials said the plan is intended to “strengthen long-term operational and financial sustainability while maintaining quality healthcare services for the Virgin Islands Community.”

Personnel Costs Targeted for Reduction

The initiative is primarily a cost-cutting measure, with hospital leadership noting “that personnel costs make up a significant portion of both hospitals’ budgets.”

Management intends to reduce those costs through “resource sharing, position consolidation through job sharing, retirements, and reviewing vacant positions,” followed by employee separations if necessary.

The overall objective is to achieve a 10 percent reduction in personnel expenses at each hospital.

First Phase Reviews Positions and Shared Resources

Management is implementing what it calls the “Human Resources Optimization Plan” in phases.

The first phase is currently underway and focuses on consolidating positions, implementing job and resource sharing between the two hospitals and reviewing budgeted positions that remain vacant.

The second phase will involve reductions in staffing levels, although hospital officials have not provided a timeline for when it will begin.

Management said the workforce review will start with exempt employees before proceeding to temporary, per diem and part-time workers.

Retirements will be considered next, followed by permanent nonunion employees. Permanent union employees will be the final group considered for separation.

“We’re looking at every available option before executing permanent workforce reductions,” said JFL and SRMC Chief Executive Officer Darlene Baptiste. “That means the number of employees ultimately affected could be much lower than the maximum budget reduction target.”

Hiring Freeze Will Remain in Place

The hospitals’ ongoing hiring freeze will continue during the workforce reduction process, “with limited exceptions for critical nursing roles and allied health professionals supporting imaging services,” according to the release.

Hospital officials said the next round of meetings will be held separately with the individual labor organizations “to discuss any specific impacts on their members, in line with collective bargaining agreements, organizational policies, and legal requirements.”

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