

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Government Workers Flood Sunshine Mall For Health Expo

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The sight at Sunshine Mall on Tuesday was one to behold as St. Croix government workers packed the first floor of the building, most of them making the trip to fill out a survey that, if not done by Friday, would cost them \$20 every two weeks from their paychecks.

"The Health Expo is mostly about wellness and healthcare, but most people are here to fill out a survey that's online," one government employee who requested anonymity told the *VI Consortium*.

The Government of the Virgin Islands provides healthcare insurance to its employees through [Cigna](#), a leading insurer. The relationship has been in place for many years and the online survey is part of an initiative to encourage members to stay healthy.

Patty Vincent, a Cigna representative, explained the program:

It's called a health assessment, and it's been done for a while in the United States. What it does is, insurance companies are now becoming proactive instead of being reactive, so they're getting the information ahead of time. So just in case your sugar number is a little high, we can start calling you and coaching you to get on a certain diet if interested, and try to get you on the right track so you don't have to go on insulin and take the pills. So, in the big picture that's how you would save the money because you're being proactive trying to catch it before it gets too far.

While the health assessment encourages people to live a healthier lifestyle, the government employees at yesterday's expo also seemed concerned about losing money if the money was already inadequate.



Government employee checking his blood

pressure

Those who take the health assessment and receive favorable biostatistics "save just over \$20 every two weeks," the employee said. And since most of the government employees already have the money on their checks, not taking the survey would see them losing \$20 every two weeks--a total of \$40 per month.

Along with the \$20 in savings, eight hours of time off is also given as a bonus, the employee added.

On the South East corner of the first floor, representatives of United Healthcare spoke to attendees and provided them with information booklets and tote bags. Marie Pero, a United Healthcare representative, provided some insight into the Government's relationship with United Healthcare.

"[United Healthcare] offers coverage to the government retirees of the Virgin Islands," she said. Retirees are considered past workers 65 and above.

Because United Healthcare's three-year contract with the Virgin Islands Government began last October, this is the company's first year at the Health Expo, Pero revealed. She added that the relationship with the government has been great so far, and is hopeful that the contract will be renewed.

As for the scope of coverage, United Healthcare "offers Medicare supplement coverage. So Medicare is the primary, and we provide the supplement insurance," Pero says for what Medicare insurance does not.



Local produce from Sejah Farms

Many companies, organizations and businesses lined the floor from east to west on either side of the building, offering multiple health-related products and services-- from local produce to fitness.

Close to the center of the room, CrossFit 7 Flags, located at 1A Estate Clifton Hill, showcased the company's offerings. Company representative, Kirwyn Figaro, said being healthy provides people with a better quality of life.

"It's very important [to stay fit] if you value the quality of life," he said. "The company's main offering is what it calls "functional movements," which includes "everyday activity like squatting, getting up from a chair, getting out of your car--just a better quality of life."

CrossFit 7 Flags is offering one hour of a "free introductory class" on Saturday mornings at 10 a.m., which entails the basics of training.

Delegate to Congress and current gubernatorial candidate, Donna Christensen, was also present. She could be seen talking to attendees and patronizing the various vendors.

The event appeared to be a success on all fronts.