

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Christensen: V.I. Government, JFL Should "Challenge" CMS Decision

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Delegate to Congress Donna Christensen met with officials from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) on Thursday, in an attempt to avert the healthcare crisis that awaits St. Croix once CMS [pulls its support](#) and terminate its medicaid program with the Juan F. Luis Hospital (JFL) on Oct. 9.

The Congresswoman said the V.I. Government and the Juan Luis Hospital should "challenge" CMS's decision, adding that JFL is St. Croix's only hospital, and such a move would only bring more hardship to patients.

"We cannot afford to have the funds that take care of our elderly who have no insurance terminated," Christensen said. "We believe that the JFL and the Government of the Virgin Islands should challenge this decision, which would seriously hurt our most vulnerable citizens."

With that, she praised the efforts of the hospital's CEO, Dr. Kendall Griffith.

"Know that Dr. Griffith and his entire staff have worked diligently to meet the conditions set by CMS, but with limited resources, in a time of great economic distress, it is difficult for them to comply with everything and we need CMS to understand that," Christensen said.

Christensen admits the hospital has its share of problems--some with greater concern than others--that must be dealt with swiftly. And, like Governor de Jongh, she has promised to work with the Legislature to avert the potential crisis. However, the congresswoman contends Juan Luis should not simply allow CMS to leave, but instead should fight back by asking for a re-audit.

A press conference will be held on Friday morning at the hospital. The *VI Consortium* will bring you more as the story develops.