

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Juan Luis Hosptial Signs New Agreement With CMS, Medicare Services Will Continue

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On Wednesday night, the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital (JFL) signed a Systems Improvement Agreement (SIA) with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), which will allow the hospital to continue to participate in the federal Medicare program. The agreement is made effective today.

According to a press release issued by the hospital, the SIA has been executed to ensure St. Croix's only hospital continues to provide healthcare services to the community and as testament to JFL's compliance with Medicare requirements. It will remain in effect for nine months--through August 20, 2015--at which time CMS will conduct a full re-survey of JFL to determine its compliance with Medicare rules.

Of the development, JFL CEO Kendall M. Griffith, said, "I would like to thank JFL staff for their collaborative efforts and dedication in getting the hospital to this important point. I also thank the St. Croix District Governing Board for their support, suggestions and extraordinary teamwork. I look forward to this next stage of implementing the Systems Improvement Agreement."

Juan Luis Hospital was on the brink of losing its certification on Oct. 9, when CMS said it would withdraw its funding from the hospital due to alarming findings outlined in a [damning 112-page report](#) following a CMS audit of the hospital in August.

JFL [managed to divert disertification](#) on Oct. 9, however, when hospital executives [met with CMS officials in Baltimore](#) on Oct. 3 and was given an extension, through November 20, to begin the process of fixing its deficiencies. Since then, JFL has undergone a number of changes, including re-establishing quorum on its St. Croix District Board, the body which provides oversight of JFL, and launching a search for top executive staff members.

An SIA is a time-limited contractual arrangement between a Medicare-accredited healthcare organization and CMS. SIAs have been used in nursing homes and organ transplant centers in the past, and recently have been implemented in hospitals.

Entering into an SIA provides more time for a healthcare organization to fix its deficiencies than is typically allotted from a validation or for-cause survey. In some cases, the timeframe has been extended to as long as 19 months. CMS may choose to cancel its pending termination sooner, especially when the hospital is found to be in full compliance with CMS's requirements outlined in the SIA.

Juan Luis Hospital says details of its Systems Improvement Agreement with CMS are forthcoming.