

The Virgin Islands Consortium

JFL Reveals Line Item Costs Of CMS Compliance, Receives \$76,000 In Private Donations

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Juan F. Luis Hospital (JFL) officials, at a press briefing Tuesday at the Cardiac Center on St. Croix, revealed the breakdown of costs making up the hospital's almost \$11 million tab to correct its deficiencies and non-compliance as part of the Systems Improvement Agreement (SIA) entered into between JFL and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on Nov. 20, 2014.

Hospital documents show JFL's "Cost of Plan of Correction" amounts to a total of \$10,324,950:

- Medications/Prescriptions Par Levels -- \$5,000,000

- Ropes & Grey (Chicago-based law firm hired to advise JFL officials) -- \$175,000
- Advisory Board Cost Containment -- \$500,000
- VRAD -- \$400,000
- Patient Keeper -- \$1,000,000
- Micromedex Solutions -- \$100,000
- Psych Unit -- \$1,500,000
- 3rd Party Consultant -- \$1,600,000

In his brief remarks, JFL CEO Dr. Kendall Griffith said the hospital had made "great strides" and "continues to improve" since the SIA was made effective almost three months ago. He said JFL has "heard CMS" and had initiated staff training in various areas, in addition to making key staff appointments. Griffith did not specify, however, how many of the tasks had been completed or how much of the funding the hospital had received to complete those tasks.

JFL has until August to become compliant with training, staffing, the appointment of an independent expert, and other requirements outlined in the SIA or risk CMS decertification.

According to Emmett Hansen II, chief of strategic management and communications, the press briefing was also a part of the hospital's "ongoing efforts to keep the public informed" of its activities, something, he said, JFL had not done a good job of in the past.



Then, noting the efforts of private citizens who have stepped up and provided financial support to the cash-strapped JFL, Hansen lauded the gesture as a "public-private partnership."

Three checks, totaling \$76,000, were presented to the hospital.

Department of Human Services holiday planning committee presented the hospital with a \$1,000 check; Jackie and Dave Johnson of Cane Bay Partners VI, LLC presented a \$25,000 check (the company will donate an additional \$25,000 at a later date); and Phil Arcidi, a JFL board member, on behalf of his family and Greenleaf VI, presented the hospital with a \$50,000 check.

In keeping with CMS staffing requirements, Dr. Griffith introduced recently hired members of the hospital's executive team.

Dr. Ken Okolo, PhD, is JFL's new chief operating officer.

"I am quite happy to be a part of a team and will demonstrate that this hospital is relevant and can provide quality care to its patients," Dr. Okolo said, adding, "We will provide quality care so that we can be the envy of hospitals around the Caribbean."

Tim Lessing, the hospital's new chief financial officer, said he was "excited about being a part of this team," adding that the leadership in place was "the team that is able turn the hospital around."

Griffith also revealed the salaries of the men employed by the government-owned JFL, pointing out that Dr. Okolo would receive an annual salary of \$200,000; Lessing would receive \$185,000 per year; and Hansen, also new to JFL's executive team, would be compensated at \$95,000 annually.

Dr. Anthony Ricketts, board chairman, highlighted the fact that quorum had been met on the hospital's current five-member governing body, but stated the board is still in need of four additional members in order to be fully staffed. He made an appeal to anyone in the general public interested in joining to apply. Current JFL board members are Kimberly Jones, Troy DeChabert Schuster , Dr. Joyce Heyliger, Arcidi and Ricketts.

Feature Image: Dr. Kendall Griffith, JFL CEO, speaks at a press briefing Tuesday at the Cardiac Center on St. Croix. He is flanked on the left by Dr. Okolo and Mr. Lessing, and on the right by Mr. Hansen, Dr. Ricketts and Mr. Arcidi.