

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI School of Medicine Chosen As 'Candidate School' For LCME Preliminary Accreditation

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The University of the Virgin Islands' School of Medicine, currently in the process of being formed, has been selected as a "candidate school" for accreditation by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME). The organization is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the [reliable authority](#) for the accreditation of medical education programs leading to the MD degree.

LCME made the decision at its February meeting after reviewing accreditation documents from UVI and voted to authorize a preliminary accreditation survey visit, which grants UVI candidacy status.

"The decision by the LCME to grant the UVI School of Medicine a site visit is a major step in the direction of having an LCME-accredited medical school in the Virgin Islands," UVI President David Hall said. "It is evidence that the documents we submitted demonstrated that we have a viable plan for a medical school that meets their standards."

Hall said the university's efforts will only intensify moving forward, as UVI leaders must now "prepare extremely hard so that we demonstrate that we can deliver on everything contained in our plan."

The UVI president also thanked "Dr. Sachs and the entire UVI team who worked so hard to allow us to achieve this important result."

Dr. Benjamin Sachs, dean of the medical school, believes the upcoming visit by LCME is proof that UVI is closer to achieving its goal of improving the health of the territory's residents and those living in the Caribbean.

"Our mission is to educate students from the diverse communities of the U.S. Virgin Islands, the wider Caribbean and the continental U.S. as physicians dedicated to the health and well-being of their communities," he said.

"These physicians will be prepared through innovative pedagogy that will result in physicians who are life-long learners, solution finders, team players and leaders of the 21st century," Sachs continued. "If we are accredited, the school will open in 2016 and is designed to have a major economic impact in the territory."

The LCME visits are expected to take place during the summer; however, the exact dates have not yet been established.

In a special meeting of UVI's Board of Trustees on Feb. 13, a resolution was approved authorizing the university to enter into a loan, not to exceed \$21 million, with the U.S. Department of Education Historically Black College and University Capital Financing Program for the construction of buildings for the School of Medicine.

Hall began making plans in earnest for a UVI medical school when a \$30 million gift was granted to the university last April from Chicago businessman, Dr. Chirinjeev Kathuria. That gift, UVI officials say, will be used for the operation of the medical school, allowing the university to create an endowment with start-up funds.

UVI's territory-wide School of Medicine is expected to be the only LCME-accredited English-speaking medical school in the Caribbean. The facility's classroom component will be built on St. Thomas, while its simulation portion will be constructed on St. Croix.