

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens Calls For Partnership Between Territory And Leading Medical Facility In Florida

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Sen. Kenneth Gittens has once more embarked on the mission to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the territory and the Miami-Jackson Memorial Medical Center, specifically it's Ryder Trauma Center arm, after previous attempts during the De Jongh administration failed.

Gittens, who is the vice-chair of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, is coordinating efforts to visit the Ryder Trauma Center while on a trip with a delegation from the Virgin Islands [currently in Miami](#) for the annual Seatrade Cruise Global conference.

Gittens said the idea is to explore the possibilities of developing a relationship between the V.I. government and the Miami-based institution, whereby high-risk professionals, including police officers, fire fighters and V.I. Water and Power Authority employees, would receive intensive care if critically injured in the line duty.

"We cannot continue playing Russian Roulette with the lives of our first responders, hoping the next incident would not be too bad," Gittens said. "We have already experienced a number of unfortunate incidents with police officers shot in the line of duty, firefighters injured on duty, and even WAPA personnel injured on the job. Healthcare is very complex and demands the best and most-innovative response in times of crisis to ensure stabilization and recovery."

Gittens hope is that the VI delegation will get an opportunity to tour the facility and become acquainted with some of its benefits to the territory's first responders.

"Last year we were able to see demonstrations including the RP- 7 robot, which is used to visit patients without the doctor physically being there. We also saw the Center's fully equipped Trauma Intensive Care Unit Conference Room, which is used for teleconferences, emergency trauma situations and training. We saw first-hand how the innovative use of technology is making a difference in providing prompt patient care and saving lives, and certainly we can capitalize on this," he said.

According to information found on its [website](#), the Ryder Trauma Center "excels in every aspect of trauma care, saving thousands of lives each year. This world-renowned, state-of-the-art center is operated by Jackson Memorial Hospital in conjunction with the University of Miami Department of Surgery under the Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care Services."

It is also the "only certified Level I trauma center in South Florida for adults and children" and is geared toward "lowering the preventable death rate by speeding up the delivery of trauma care during the "golden hour," the critical 60 minutes after an injury."

Jackson Memorial Hospital sees over 8,000 emergency patients each year, about 3,600 at the Ryder Trauma Center.

Gittens said he hopes to have an informative and progressive dialogue with the hospital's administrators.