

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Signs Proclamations Recognizing October As Breast Cancer Awareness, Disability Employment Month

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ST. CROIX -- Recognized as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month across the U.S. and territories, and being the number one killer of women in the Virgin Islands, Governor Kenneth Mapp has signed a proclamation in honor of the month-long recognition, as the territory remembers those who've lost their lives, survivors and others fighting to win the battle. He also committed to "redouble" efforts to improve care in the islands, while bringing attention the disease and its deadly effects.

"The heartache and the pain of this disease will touch too many of our mothers, fathers, daughters, and sisters, and too many families will bear these burdens," Mapp said in a press release issued on Thursday. "During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we recognize all those who know the anguish of breast cancer, and we redouble our efforts to improve care and bring attention to this disease. When breast cancer is caught early, treatments work best and survival rates increase.

"That is why all women and men should be familiar with the risk factors and symptoms of this disease. I encourage women to speak with their health care provider about the risk of breast cancer and the importance of recommended mammograms -- breast cancer screenings play an essential role in early detection," Mr. Mapp said.

He added: "As the Territory observes *National Breast Cancer Awareness Month* during the month of October we salute the women and men who dedicate themselves to prevention, detection, and treatment; we show our support for every individual and every family struggling with breast cancer; and we pause to remember those we have lost. Community organizations, churches, synagogues and other places of worship, as well as work sites, can play a special role in educating members or employees about breast cancer."

The governor also encouraged residents to learn the facts of breast cancer and to encourage all women to talk to their health care providers about regular clinical breast examinations, getting regular mammograms, and practicing monthly breast self-examinations.

"I encourage all residents of the United States Virgin Islands to join me in observing this occasion" concluded the governor.

In other action, Mr. Mapp signed a separate proclamation on Thursday declaring October as Disability Awareness Month.

Through the press release, the territory's leader says he has taken the lead in to advance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, a federally funded effort administered by the Department of Human Services offering practical assistance to persons with disabilities to facilitate employment.

The program partners closely with the Department of Labor and the private sector to help create employment opportunities for the disabled. Annually, more than 400 clients are served through the VRP and each year approximately 50 of these individuals achieve their goal of competitive employment, according to the release.

Said Governor Mapp: "Through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, clients have obtained jobs as sales clerks, maintenance workers, cashiers, data entry clerks, security officers, teachers, public transportation drivers, fashion designers, and graphic artists to name a few. More and more disabled individuals are assuming positions of leadership and responsibility throughout the country and in the territory.

"Advances over the years have helped to eliminate many of the physical barriers that once prevented disabled individuals from participating fully in the social and economic life of their communities. This month provides the opportunity for all residents to recognize

the tremendous value and potential of people with disabilities and to recommit and dedicate ourselves to the empowerment, integration, employment and full inclusion of every one of our residents with disabilities” stated Governor Mapp in his proclamation.

“I call upon employers, schools and other community organizations throughout the Territory to observe this month and to support employment efforts of individuals with disabilities in acknowledgement of this year's theme *My disability is one part of who I am. At work, it's what people can do that matters*” stated the Governor upon signing the proclamation.”

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