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Bryan Forms Task Force to Begin 'Healthy VI Housing Initiative'

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The Office of Governor Albert Bryan has partnered with local stakeholders and the Corporation for Supportive Housing to launch the V.I. Healthy Housing Initiative to assess housing and healthcare services in four key areas, including Behavioral Health, Youth Rehabilitation Services, Supportive Housing, and Elder Care Services, Government House has announced.

The Office of the Governor convened the V.I. Healthy Housing Task Force, which comprises representatives from the Department of Human Services; Department of Health; Virgin Islands Housing Authority; Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority; Department of Labor; Workforce Development Board; St. Croix Foundation; Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands; Lutheran Social Services; Office of Disaster Recovery; Frederiksted Health Care Inc.; St. Thomas East End Medical Corporation; Juan F. Luis Hospital; and Schneider Regional Medical Center.

Members of the project steering committee met last week via Webinar. During his welcoming remarks, Mr. Bryan said the recovery projects offer an opportunity to reassess the entire landscape of housing and healthcare-related services for at-risk residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“The V.I. Healthy Housing Initiative will help us determine the best way to utilize our financial resources to either build or retrofit facilities and centers of excellence that serve persons experiencing mental illness or require substance abuse services, children needing rehabilitation services, the homeless and persons with disabilities and our elderly, who need senior services and skilled nursing homes,” the governor said.

The Healthy Housing Initiative will roll out in three phases, beginning with an assessment and inventory of the Territory’s housing and healthcare services, according to the release.

Phase 2, scheduled for the end of 2020, will consist of a charrette action planning session to conduct a collaborating review of the Territory’s current housing and healthcare services and determine what additional services are needed and develop a comprehensive service and housing action plan.

Phase 3, which is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2021, will consist of implementing recommendations and putting into place an overhauled housing and healthcare system in the Territory.

Among the many areas being assessed are:

- Types of services provided
- Identifying populations served and population estimates for the next ten years.
- Determining the continuum of care category for each service
- Assess the quality of care provided
- Ascertain best practices for the Government of the Virgin Islands or non-profits to deliver efficient services
- Identify gaps in services and recommendations to address needs.
- Develop metrics to determine the effectiveness of the plan
- Develop workforce estimates and advise on the types of staffing needed
- Draft a comprehensive health and human services residential facilities plan based on the four focus areas

“More importantly, we will develop a comprehensive housing and healthcare residential facilities plan that will be sustainable for generations to come,” Governor Bryan told the task force, Webinar attendees. “This effort will eliminate the replication of services and deploy our resources efficiently and effectively, doing away with the silos as we work together as a Territory to address these long-standing issues in our community.”