

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Juan Luis Hospital Receives CMS Accreditation

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ST. CROIX -- At its monthly board meeting, acting CEO of the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center Dr. Ken Okolo, announced that the hospital had received accreditation status by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid on January 4.

"The CMS found condition-level compliance with required Conditions of Participation (CoPs), and we acknowledge both the efforts and progress your facility has made to accomplish that level of compliance," said CMS Associate Regional Administrator J. William Roberson in a letter dated Jan. 4.

There were some deficiencies identified by CMS, and federal officials require a Plan of Correction (PoC) to address those deficiencies submitted to them by January 14, 2016.

Overall, though, the notice releases JFL from the current Systems Improvement Agreement (SIA) they have been under, and Dr. Okolo welcomed the good news.

"This announcement is a testament to the hard work that the staff and management of JFL have put in to achieve CMS certification, and it represents the direction JFL will continue to move in, as we strive to be the best hospital in the Caribbean," said Dr. Okolo.

The acting CEO also expressed praise for JFL's governing board who he says helped to guide the process in many instances.

"We, the members of the governing board of directors of JFL, congratulate Dr. Okolo, the executive team, and the entire staff of JFL for achieving this significant milestone in the history of the hospital," said JFL Governing Board Chair Troy de Chabert-Schuster. "We look forward to continued progress as we strive to provide quality healthcare to the people of St. Croix, the Virgin Islands and ultimately the entire Caribbean."

The news comes a relief to hospital officials who had worked hard to meet CMS standards after the federal agency [declared in 2014 that it would no longer provide medicare and medicaid services to JFL](#), a move that would have devastated healthcare on this island. However, after incessant lobbying, an [extension](#) was [given](#) to the hospital to come into compliance, and led by former CEO Dr. Kendall Griffith, hospital officials undertook a vigorous strategy to meet CMS standards. Dr. Griffith is [no longer at the medical facility](#), but his efforts while there are yielding results.

And CMS accreditation was not the only good news announced at the board meeting on Monday. The facility's Chief Financial Officer, Tim Lessing, announced that for the first time in its history, JFL had secured a surplus of \$5.4 million. There was also a presentation by Lahey Hospital and Medical Center detailing a potential partnership between the two facilities.

According to its About Us page, Lahey Hospital & Medical Center is a physician-led, nonprofit group practice. More than 500 physicians and 5,000 nurses, therapists and other support staff work together to provide compassionate care and superior patient outcomes. Lahey's multidisciplinary approach allows patients access to preeminent physicians from virtually every medical specialty, who cooperate to develop personalized treatment plans for each patient.