

The Virgin Islands Consortium

JFL Has Ten Days To Submit Plan Of Action To CMS On How It Intends To Correct Identified Deficiencies

Health / **Published On January 06, 2016 05:48 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **January 06, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- While the Juan F. Luis Hospital [has been granted accreditation](#) by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the facility will need to present a plan of action within ten days that will make plain to CMS how JFL intends to correct some 15 deficiencies the federal agency identified during its inspection.

That's according to JFL officials speaking at a press conference held at the hospital yesterday. There, Hazel Philbert-Thomas, chief of Quality & Performance, revealed the areas that require corrective measures. Some of the citations include medical staff accountability, patients rights, seclusion restraints, nursing care, administration of drugs, timely completion of medical records, having therapeutic diets for some patients,

environment care and infection control (which is tied to environmental care).

Acting CEO Dr. Ken Okolo said once the plan of action is submitted within the ten-day period, the hospital would then be given an additional 30 days to implement those changes. He also said that the accreditation status given by CMS is final, and would not be changed unless CMS does another inspection and finds the hospital wanting.

Chairman of the Committee on Health, Hospital & Human Services, Senator Kurt Violet, in a press release issued on Tuesday, commended Dr. Okolo and the JFL staff, noting the positive changes that have been implemented at the hospital. According to the release, while the senator is pleased with the CMS certification, he looks forward to continued growth.

The news of certification comes as 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 a JFL 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.

Present at yesterday's press conference were the following: Troy de Chabert-Schuster, JFL Governing Board chair, Dr. Ken Okolo, JFL Acting CEO, Stephanie Williams, St. Croix administrator, Justa Encarnacion JFL chief nursing officer, Dr. Mavis Matthew, JFL chief medical officer, Dr. Ramesh Lakhram, JFL president of the medical staff and Ms. Philbert-Thomas, JFL VP of quality and performance improvement.