

The Virgin Islands Consortium

D.H.S. Commissioner-Designee: Relocation Of Sea View Patients To Continue

Health / **Published On September 30, 2016 10:51 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **September 30, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- Despite returning three patients that were relocated to the Roy Lester Schneider Hospital to Sea View Nursing Home -- the beleaguered facility that has been decertified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services -- Department of Human Services (D.H.S.) Commissioner-Designee Anita Roberts, told The Consortium late Thursday that the department's plan to remove all the patients from Sea View would continue.

"Sea View is a private facility and in keeping with the Department of Human Services' concern for our most vulnerable seniors, we have implemented our plan to relocate the residents to more suitable facilities," Ms. Roberts told The Consortium through a

message last night. "We are currently preparing more additional beds at Queen Louis and Herbert Grigg in St. Croix. We are not moving patients back to Sea View and are working closely with families in the care of their seniors."

D.H.S. and Ms. Roberts came under fire from some families of patients housed at Sea View, and from at least one 31st Legislature senator for the alleged hasty manner in which the relocation was handled.

In a [press release issued late Thursday](#), Senator Tregenza Roach said Ms. Roberts had misread [a letter](#) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.), Office of Residential Care Facilities, which asked for the Government of the Virgin Islands's plan for action relative to relocating the patients, and not their immediate removal.

He said D.H.S. should return all the patients back to Sea View until a proper solution was found. And the senator noted that the patients' new location, Queen Louise Home of the Aged in St. Thomas, lacked the necessary tools to adequately care for the influx of Sea View residents. Ms. Roberts said of the 18 residents that last lived at Sea View, 10 had been moved, 7 to Queen Louise and 3 to the R.L.S.H., although the three placed at the hospital were returned to Sea View. The remaining 8, as of Thursday, were still at the facility.

"I am especially aware of the conditions at Queen Louise after having successfully ushered through the Legislature a measure to provide \$100,000.00 to meet the critical needs of residents there," Mr. Roach said.

According to Mr. Roach, when Queen Louise Home administrators testified at the Legislature in support of the measure, they indicated many needs at the facility, among them a fire alarm system, electrical repairs, a commercial washing machine, a water heater for the laundry, lack of transportation, and many other items.

"I could hardly imagine that they are in any better condition to house these fragile, elderly residents than Sea View, presently is," he said. Mr. Roach made his comments after visiting Sea View earlier today, meeting with administrators and staff there, touring the facilities, and reviewing documents exchanged between the Government of the Virgin Islands and H.U.D., which holds a mortgage on the Sea View property.

"It is clear from the correspondence," the senator continued, "that all H.U.D. was seeking was the government's plan for relocation for the residents be provided to H.U.D. 'within 24 hours of receipt of this letter,' and not an immediate evacuation."

An attempt for a longer conversation with Ms. Roberts last night was not possible, with the commissioner-designee blaming a meeting that she was to attend. What remains unclear is why the patients were removed from Sea View with such haste, if the letter did not call for their immediate removal, but rather a plan of action from the Mapp administration.

Cherie Munchez, the administration's communications director, said Ms. Roberts did not misinterpret the letter, but that she was concerned about the patients' well-being, and hence moved to relocate them immediately. But Ms. Munchez's answer does not address the manner in which some residents say their elderly loved ones were treated.

Mr. Roach said he was horrified at the description provided by staff of the way in which the seniors had been picked up and removed from the place where some have lived for as long as 22 years. He observed that the staff at Sea View were concerned that residents did not even get to take personal effects and that a communication board critical to allowing a resident to express herself was left behind.

“We can make this better, by returning all the residents back to their familiar surroundings while we all come together and address the required plan for their future care,” he said.

Feature Image: Anita Roberts.

© Viconsortium 2026