

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Attempting To Lose Weight In Stateside Program

Health / **Published On October 13, 2016 02:23 PM /**

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp has never been the type to shy away from his weight problem. He usually derides himself at events, even while expressing his love for good food. The governor has also expressed a desire to lose weight, and during his [current trip to the U.S. with Dept. of Health Commissioner Dr. Michelle Davis](#) -- where the two are evaluating options for wellness programs that may be incorporated into healthcare offerings for employees of the Virgin Islands government -- the administration's communications director, Cherie Munchez, has confirmed to The Consortium that Mr. Mapp has been enrolled in a weight-loss program.

The governor's "doing three cycles a day, plus walking, but I don't know what exercise they're giving him," Ms. Munchez said. "Obviously part of that program is also teaching

you diet, exercise, healthy eating habits and other personal areas relating to your own personal care and oversight. So it's a very comprehensive approach." Ms. Munchez said the program Mr. Mapp is enrolled in on the mainland could wind up being the very same program that government employees would be enrolled in under the new, health-first approach if it were to be implemented.

And Mr. Mapp will host a press briefing when he returns to the territory relative to research being conducted to transform the government's insurance policy to a wellness-based offering, with the aim of reducing premiums.

The current cost of insurance for Government of the Virgin Islands employees is approximately \$165 million annually, and is estimated to exceed \$200 million by 2018, according to Government House.

Ms. Munchez told this publication this morning that the current vendor's contract will soon expire, "so in order to make a change like this, we need to start identifying what opportunities the governor's going to explore as far as insurance, based on this wellness initiative, which ties into the school lunch program, the support that he's giving the Department of Agriculture -- these are all of the pieces that get us to a better, healthier Virgin Islands based on diet and exercise," she said.

As for the governor's own weight-losing efforts, Ms. Munchez says residents will appreciate the chief executive's efforts.

"The aftermath of him losing weight I guess is we're all going to be happy," she said.