

The Virgin Islands Consortium

CMS Denies J.F.L.'s Plan Of Correction; Hospital Submits New Document

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ST. CROIX -- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in December denied a Plan of Correction (P.O.C.) that officials of the Juan F. Luis Hospital had submitted in response to C.M.S.'s request, following a visit to the hospital late last year [that found it to be out of compliance](#) with C.M.S. standards.

Richard Evangelista, chief executive of the hospital, said the new submission would be adequate to meet C.M.S.'s conditions of participation, as the hospital works on long-term solutions relative to environmental care.

The 31st Legislature mid-December [approved \\$5 million](#) for the C.M.S.-cited repairs, with some of the funds being made available not through the floating of bonds, but through monies already available at the Public Finance Authority, [according to Nellon Bowry](#), Office of Management and Budget director.

The hospital also moved to file suit against C.M.S. for failing to increase the reimbursement rate for services the federal agency provides, which would reflect the true costs of medical services offered, compared to the current pricing that C.M.S. gives the hospital based on rates that were charged 20 years ago.

C.M.S. reimburses the Juan F. Luis Hospital \$10,000 for every \$18,000 worth of care provided to Medicare and Medicaid patients -- a loss of about \$8 million annually. Yet, even after requesting from C.M.S. the current pricing levels almost a year ago, the federal agency had yet to respond as of last night. Board Treasurer Philip Arcidi, who announced the suit, made a motion that begins a search for a law firm suitable for the job. The motion was approved by the board.

In other discussions, the board said monthly financial allocations from the government were being delayed, which may force the hospital to make redundant some staff to improve the hospital's bottom line.

"We do not wish to put anyone on the street, but we don't want individuals coming in off the street dying," said Chair of the Finance and Human Resources Committees Theresa Frorup-Alie.