

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. Of Health Says It Will Improve Communication With Medical Evacuees

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Ernice Gilbert **October 14, 2017**



ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Department of Health told The Consortium on Friday that it would work to improve its communication with medical evacuees sent to various states across the U.S., following a [Consortium report](#) that revealed the department's negligence regarding medical evacuees sent to the state of Georgia.

According to D.O.H. Commissioner Michelle Davis, the department will be in contact with the medical evacuees no later than Monday, and will give details relative to their length of stay at the stateside facilities, among other important information.

On Wednesday, The Consortium reported that medical evacuees were frustrated with the Virgin Islands government's lack of communication with them, which they say has caused confusion and disappointment.

"I feel like we are the forgotten people and no one has ever inquired how do we feel. I feel like someone should be telling us when we should come home — I want to come home like yesterday," said one medical evacuee in Atlanta.

The lack of communication and information has also caused depression among some evacuees, and has disheartened the medical professionals in the state of Georgia working with them, said a medical assistant working directly with the evacuees. "They are confused and even though they may be taken care of, they are confused and the lack of sufficient information is stressful to medical evacuees in Atlanta. They want to know why they can't get more information directly from their government," said the assistant, who spoke with The Consortium three times about the situation, and whose identity the publication has chosen to keep anonymous because he was not cleared to speak publicly about the matter.

During a recent press briefing, Ms. Davis said D.O.H. had been preparing a strategy to return medical evacuees to the USVI. Asked during a following press briefing about her comment, Ms. Davis said the plan was still being prepared, however medical evacuees returning to the territory and still in need of care would be readmitted to mobile hospital units that are to be stationed on the grounds of the Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas, and the Juan F. Luis Hospital on St. Croix. Both Ms. Davis and Governor Kenneth Mapp have said that the mobile units will serve as fully equipped hospitals, and will be stationed in the USVI as long as they are needed. The U.S. Department of Defense, working with FEMA, will install the units, according to Mr. Mapp.