

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Juan Luis Hospital Appoints New CEO

Health / **Published On October 17, 2017 09:33 AM /**

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ST. CROIX -- The Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center's governing board announced late Monday that it had selected a new CEO, naming Wanda M. Ruben to the chief executive post, a position at the beleaguered facility that has been volatile at best during the past few years.

The selection of Ms. Ruben was made during an emergency board meeting held last night at the hospital; former acting CEO, Richard Evangelista, who served in the position for well over a year and during a time when the hospital seemed to be in perennial crisis, was returned to his role as the hospital's chief legal counsel.

"The District Governing Board of Directors of the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center congratulates Ms. Wanda Ruben on her appointment as CEO of this institution," said Troy deChabert-Schuster, the board's acting chairman. "Ms. Ruben, a native daughter of St. Croix, is very experienced in nursing and healthcare administration and we are confident in her ability to lead JFL into the future."

The leadership change follows damage the hospital sustained by Hurricane Maria, and comes as it faces an urgent need of funds for repairs and operations.

On the hospital's grounds, Department of Defense personnel, through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, have been installing mobile medical units that Governor Kenneth Mapp has said will function as fully equipped hospitals.

"The board thanks Atty. Richard Evangelista for his service as acting CEO," Mr. deChabert-Schuster said. "Atty. Evangelista served during a very challenging time in the history of JFL and the Virgin Islands. He led the hospital through CMS surveys and two Category 5 hurricanes. We thank him for his courageous leadership."

It was not divulged why Mr. Evangelista was removed.

Ms. Ruben has been serving as JFL's chief nursing officer (CNO) since July of this year, according to the hospital. The release says she has more than 19 years of healthcare experience, and prior to working at JFL, she worked most recently as the CNO at Garden Grove Hospital Medical Center in California.

Ms. Ruben also has an extensive background in nursing administration, including wide-ranging experience in emergency department management, according to JFL. She obtained a bachelor of science degree in nursing from Loma Linda University, and a master of science degree in nursing from the University of Phoenix.