

The Virgin Islands Consortium

531 USVI Residents Have Been Evacuated For Medical Needs Since 2017 Storms; 41 Have Died, According To The New York Times

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Since Hurricanes Irma and Maria struck the U.S. Virgin Islands in September, 531 residents have been evacuated to other U.S. jurisdictions for medical needs, and 41 have died, according to The New York Times, which wrote a story on the state of evacuees over the weekend.

Of the 41 patients who have died, 15 of them were dialysis patients, The Times said. And of the 531 who were evacuated, about half of them were accompanied by a family member. The Times said many of those who were evacuated were already critically ill.

The effort to airlift hundreds of medical patients out of their homes, in this case the Virgin Islands, to locations across the U.S. for medical care, was carried out through a program called the [National Disaster Medical System](#), which has been used for years to transport hospital patients out of disaster zones for treatment to unaffected hospitals, according to The Times.

The Times's story focuses on a medical evacuee from St. Croix named Juanita Edwards, 84, who is now in Atlanta receiving care and had never left the Caribbean before the deadly 2017 hurricane season, The Times said. Ms. Edwards would love to return home, but if she did, she would quickly die. Her daughter, Gloria Edwards, is Ms. Edwards's primary caregiver. She told The Times that her mother's desire is that she return home. "It's rough on her," Gloria Edwards said. "She wants to go home. She wants to go home now."

The full story, an excellent read, can be found [here](#).

Feature Image: Schneider Regional Medical patients land on St. Croix near the Juan F. Luis Hospital following Hurricane Irma, to be evacuated to medical facilities in Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)