

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Michelle Davis's 2-Year Contract With The GVI Ends This Month. What's Next?

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The 2-year contract of Michelle Davis, who is on loan from the federal government and has been serving in the capacity of health commissioner in the U.S. Virgin Islands, ends this month, but Government House has yet to make known whether the commissioner's contract will be renewed, or whether she would return to the federal government, where she served at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (H.H.S.).

While rumors have been circulating that Ms. Davis would leave by the end of March and be replaced by Reuben Molloy, the [former head of the Bureau of Information Technology](#) and current assistant commissioner at D.O.H., a Government House source has told The Consortium that a renewal of the contract was being negotiated. Officially, Sandra

Goomansingh, the administration's media spokesperson, said she was not aware that Ms. Davis's contract was expiring. And Nykole Tyson, D.O.H.'s director of public relations, said Government House should give an official statement on the commissioner's status.

When announcing her appointment [in January 2016](#), Mr. Mapp praised Ms. Davis as the right person to lead D.O.H.

“Dr. Davis is quite familiar with our challenges,” he said in January 2016. “As you could say, she knows what she’s getting into, as she has worked closely with us since last year on the federal level, in addressing many of the challenges such as staff recruitment, professional development, outbreak response, public health communication, data collection, vital statistics and grant management.”

Ms. Davis was also instrumental in organizing and facilitating the first Center for Disease Control comprehensive sight visit to the territory, as well as a Virgin Islands governor’s first visit to the CDC to learn more about public healthcare transformation. Dr. Davis’ efforts had yielded public-private sector commitments to provide long-term public health technical assistance and training, according to the governor.

According to information found on the H.H.S.'s website in 2016, Ms. Davis held the position of regional health administrator (R.H.A.) with H.H.S.'s New York regional office. While she is serving in the territory, the position is [being held by April Smith-Hirak](#). It was not clear whether Ms. Davis would retain the same position if she were to return to the federal government.

If she leaves, her exit would come at an inopportune time for the territory, as Ms. Davis is currently overseeing the installment of mobile hospital units in the territory to facilitate medical services. Permanent units are [expected to be installed between June and July](#).

The R.H.A. serves as the principal federal public health authority for the Secretary of H.H.S. and the assistant secretary for health. The R.H.A. also assures collaborative promotion of the surgeon general’s initiatives.

Prior to her position at H.H.S. Ms. Davis served as the deputy R.H.A. for the Mid-Atlantic region (DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WVA) as the health liaison between H.H.S. and state/local agencies, coordinated regional/national programs, recommended policies and served on the federal emergency preparedness, response and recovery team.

She has worked as a public health professional in a variety of positions at the federal, state and municipal levels. This included the deputy secretary for Health for the Pennsylvania Department of Health. She was responsible for oversight of over 600 staff and a budget of \$250 million.

Before working with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania she held positions as Deputy Health Commissioner for Policy and Planning with the City of Philadelphia and senior epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). She has also held positions with the states of South Carolina, Indiana and New York and at the local level with the City of Detroit and with the District of Columbia as a CDC federal assignee.

Ms. Davis has held several elected positions within professional organizations including; president and chair of the Board of the Pennsylvania Public Health Association (PPHA), President and Vice-President of the Black Caucus of Health Workers of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and Governing Councilor for the Epidemiology Section of APHA.

Ms. Davis matriculated at the University of Michigan majoring in biology and psychology at the undergraduate level. She continued her education at the University of South Carolina, Johns Hopkins and the University of North Carolina where she majored in epidemiology for her graduate degrees.