

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan To Introduce Legislation Unifying Hospital Boards

Health / **Published On January 30, 2019 09:46 AM /**

Staff **January 30, 2019**



Governor Albert Bryan said during his State of the Territory Address on Monday that he would forward legislation to the 33rd Legislature that seeks to change the current structure of the governing boards of USVI hospitals from three to one. Currently, there's a board that governs the Juan F. Luis Hospital, another governing the Schneider Regional Medical Center, and a third, the territorial board, which governs both medical facilities.

"As required by law, it is essential that we move to have our hospitals operate under one single hospital board," Mr. Bryan said. "We will be sending legislation to unify our hospital system finally." A timeline for the legislation was not mentioned in the address.

Mr. Bryan also spoke of repairing the Schneider Regional Medical Center and rebuilding J.F.L. and the Myrah Keating Community Health Center, projects that were birthed under the Mapp administration. He did not elaborate on whether the funds were already provided by FEMA, or when said projects would start, however.

"We are pursuing a health strategy that not only captures the needs of our people but allows for the expansion of our capabilities as the economy grows. And grow it will. That expansion includes our federally qualified health centers and private clinics," Mr. Bryan said during his address.

He added, "However, our challenge of attracting quality healthcare professionals to the territory remains. For those professionals already here, and our residents who rely on their services, we want to assure you that our agenda to move forward with the reconstruction of our hospitals and clinics is a priority."

The governor also revealed that both J.F.L. and S.R.M.C. were bleeding money.

"For the fiscal year 2019, the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital forecasts it will operate at a monthly cash loss of \$1.5 million. The Roy L. Schneider Regional Medical Center also anticipates monthly operating losses of \$1.2 million," Mr. Bryan said. These forecasts do not include the over \$10 million each hospital owes to WAPA nor the more than \$50 million debt amassed by the healthcare facilities before the hurricanes."