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Dept. of Health Finally Pays Employees Who Had Worked for Months Answering Covid-19 Related Calls

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Ernice Gilbert **October 16, 2020**

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V.I. Department of Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion on Thursday confirmed to the Consortium that employees who had worked for up to four months without pay taking Covid-19 related calls, and relaying information to health officials vital to the success of combating the virulent disease, were finally paid Wednesday.

The Consortium first reported on the matter [on Oct. 6](#), and followed up with Ms. Encarnacion Tuesday during Governor Bryan's Covid-19 response update. The commissioner further stated that the employees received pay for all the months they were owed.

At the time of our original report, Ms. Encarnacion apologized for the protracted wait. "It's been a long time and it's unfortunate that it has taken that long and I'm sorry. I've said to them that

I'm really sorry that the process has taken long, but we are really trying to work with everyone to make sure that we deliver all the information that we're supposed to deliver, and that they get their payment as soon as possible," the commissioner told the Consortium as she expressed regret over the matter.

The Consortium had received a call from one of the employees, who called on behalf of her colleagues. This employee said the decision to call was a last resort because nothing else had worked.

"We have not received not one paycheck yet," said the frustrated employee, who spoke of hardships some colleagues had been through trying to survive while working months without receiving pay "[The Dept. of Health] is receiving all of its health information from all of these individuals who may or may not have Covid-19. We're the ones answering the hotlines and giving them the information so that the epidemiologist can make contact with these people, and information can trickle down to contact tracers so they can do their jobs." The employee spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak freely on the matter.