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# Philanthropist Donald Sussman Donates \$6 Million to Establish School of Medicine at UVI, in What is Being Called a 'Landmark' Investment

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**Donald Sussman, former UVI Board of Trustees, a noted philanthropist, financier, and St. John homeowner. By. UVI**

University of the Virgin Islands announced today that former Board of Trustees member Donald Sussman, a noted philanthropist, financier, and St. John homeowner, has made a \$6 million donation to establish a medical school at the university, in what the university is referring to as a "landmark" investment in the institution.

The project will become only the fifth historically black medical school in the United States and its territories, subject to receiving approval by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, UVI

said.

“This is an exciting milestone for our University and, more importantly, our entire community,” said UVI President Dr. David Hall, who also revealed that the facility will be named the “S. Donald Sussman School of Medicine”. According to the UVI president, the medical school “will improve the quality of education and health care across the Virgin Islands, and this donation reinforces Donald’s passion for and belief in the transformative power of both. Donald has long been a supporter of the University, and his incredible gift is the foundation upon which we build moving forward.”

Mr. Sussman, the founder of Paloma Partners, was a member of the UVI Board of Trustees from 2008 to 2012. This gift follows a previous gift from Sussman for the naming of the medical school classroom building in honor of his scientist father, William, UVI said.

“UVI embodies all that I love about the Virgin Islands - its beauty and resilience, and the incredible strength and warmth of its community. The establishment of a medical school will serve to further enhance those qualities and ensure that more young people will have the opportunity to learn, grow, and live here,” said Mr. Sussman. “Moreover, this medical school will have a tremendous impact on the physical and mental health of residents, and I am proud to be a part of this critical, ongoing effort to improve overall quality of life on the islands.”

Governor Albert Bryan stated, “This is one monumental step in realizing the goal of a Virgin Islands’ Medical School. The persistence of Dr. Hall and the university as well as the tireless commitment to this community by Donald Sussman is greatly appreciated.”

The UVI S. Donald Sussman School of Medicine would be the first new Historically Black College and University (HBCU) medical school since 1975 and the only public HBCU medical school in the nation. It would also be the first accredited and English-speaking medical school in the Caribbean, with facilities on St. Croix and St. Thomas and partnerships with medical institutions on all three islands.

“Students from the Virgin Islands and other Caribbean islands who normally have to pursue their medical school dream in the mainland, can now be trained and inspired in the Virgin Islands. We are confident that this fact, along with scholarship support, will ensure that more of them will end up practicing medicine in the Virgin Islands or the broader Caribbean,” said Dr. Benjamin Sachs, planning dean of the developing medical school.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), medical schools and teaching hospitals in their network contributed more than \$562 billion in value to the national economy in 2017.

According to the release, currently designed, facilities will include a state-of-the-art simulation training center on St. Croix, a classroom building that contains an anatomy lab with advanced visualization, 100-seat lecture hall, and a clinical skills lab. Due to a grant from the Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, a Biomedical Laboratory facility will also be added to the medical school complex on St. Thomas.

“The bedrock of a strong progressive health care system is education. I look forward to the integral part the UVI Medical School will play in producing the next generation of bright and dedicated physicians that can serve at home and abroad,” said Emmanuel Graham, MD, president of the Virgin Islands Medical Society.

When surveyed in 2014 during UVI's research on the viability of the project, more than 75 percent of practicing physicians in the U.S. Virgin Islands agreed to serve as faculty members as students conduct their clinical rotations. The University anticipates that even more will join the effort once accreditation is obtained, UVI said.

"As a local Virgin Islander who returned home to practice medicine, the addition of an accredited medical school to the University of the Virgin Islands will truly be an incredible asset to our territory and neighboring Caribbean islands as it relates to recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals," said Dr. Tai Hunte-Ceasar, medical director and territorial infectious disease specialist at the V.I. Department of Health. "The medical school will provide an increased opportunity for Virgin Islanders and other students of the Caribbean to be trained in a cutting edge, innovative setting and likely give rise to the newest members of our medical community. The medical school further enhances the possibilities of collaborations across the public and private healthcare networks that will lead to partnerships resulting in increased healthcare outcomes throughout the community."

UVI said it plans to submit its application for preliminary accreditation to the Liaison Committee for Medical Education in November.

"As he has done in the past, Donald has provided the financial support for us to realize our goal," Dr. Hall continued. "We are now actively raising a scholarship fund to compliment his generous gift, which will allow us to provide prospective students with the financial support they may need to realize their goal of studying and practicing medicine. Please join us if you are interested in helping us make this dream a reality."

Additional contributions to the project can be [made online on the University's website](#). To learn more about supporting the UVI School of Medicine, contact the Institutional Advancement Office at (340) 693-1040 or email Vice President Mitchell Neaves at [mneaves@uvi.edu](mailto:mneaves@uvi.edu).