

Dyma Williams, Current Acting JFL CEO, Not Among Final Candidates for Permanent Chief Executive Position

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Dyma Williams at the Senate By. USVI LEGISLATURE

ST. CROIX — Dyma Williams, who was appointed acting CEO of the Juan F. Luis Hospital in Sept. 2018 [following the swift removal](#) of then-CEO Wanda Reuben and chief financial officer at the time Deepak Bansal, was not among the final candidates for the permanent chief executive officer position, according to two people with intimate knowledge of the matter.

The selections were made by the hospital's board of directors. The board has already informed Ms. Williams of the outcome, and she is expected to be replaced soon, said one of the people, who spoke to the Consortium on the condition of anonymity. JFL chief legal counsel Chivonne

Thomas, who also serves as the hospital's public relations officer, said she could not comment on the matter.

Ms. Williams took the helm at the hospital after [the turbulent tenure of Ms. Reuben](#) approximately one year to date since the devastating hurricanes of 2017. She has led the medical facility through some of its most difficult adversities, all while working to transition operations from the current building to modular units called JFL North.

Even so, the hospital continues to struggle with operations, with residents routinely lambasting the facility as low quality, many contending they would rather fly to the mainland for health care. Others have spoken of the prolonged wait times at the emergency room, and protracted wait for procedures such as surgeries — a problem compounded by the hospital's financial constraints.

JFL North, which was supposed to be in operation, is now projected to come online in 2022 — five years after Hurricane Maria. During a February hearing, JFL officials, including Ms. Williams, told senators that [the hospital needed an immediate infusion of cash](#) if it were to continue making payroll. A big reason for the drop in revenue was JFL North's delayed opening which was causing an exodus of patients to the mainland and other destinations for healthcare, hospital officials said.

JFL North's delay appeared to be a lapse in judgement by the current leadership. The delay occurred because a structure that houses oxygen for JFL North, which it cannot operate without, to this day has not been built. Asked about this matter, Ms. Williams said the oxygen facility was always part of the plan, but it was part of plan B, not plan A.

Plan A, she said, was to connect JFL North to the current hospital's oxygen system, a decision she said was made to hasten the process of opening. But the plan backfired.

"We had a first phase approach where the medical gases were supposed to be piped in from our current system," Ms. Williams said during an interview in April. However, the hospital brought in a company to evaluate the feasibility of using the current system, and "they determined that it would not in fact be safe to hook up JFL North, the new hospital, to the existing medical gas system," Ms. Williams said.

She added, "We had always anticipated phase B, which would have been the buildout of the oxygen generator, the construction, the connections the utilities, the trenching." Ms. Williams described the buildout as a "very technically complex build, so it takes time."

She said plan B was always in the works because "we knew that JFL was going to go away. But when the certifying agency did not certify plan A as safe and sound, we then had to quickly transition to plan B, which is taking no less than six to nine months of construction because of the technicality of the build."

She said the design request for proposal for what is called a cement mechanical unit (CMU) that houses all the technical support for the infrastructure of JFL North was sent out late March or early April of this year. Once a vendor is selected, it would take six to nine months for construction of the facility, Ms. Williams stated — easily pushing back the opening of JFL North into 2022.

Asked why wasn't plan B the first option, Ms. Williams said, "Because we were trying to shorten the schedule to the greatest extent possible, and plan A would allow us to do that." She added, "People often want us to hurry up, and when we do those things and it fails then we get punished

for it failing."

In April, the hospital came under fire [following the collapse of a nurse](#) who was administering care in the Virgin Islands Cardiac Center (V.I.C.C.) at JFL because of heat of nearly 100 degrees. The nurse was rushed to the emergency room for care. The incident exposed a surfeit of problems at the hospital, including lack of financial resources and not enough space to house patients following the decommissioning of the hospital's third floor after Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Ms. Williams's exit will not diminish the problems faced by the hospital, many of them beyond the control of the CEO. In October 2019, Senator Novelle Francis called on Governor Albert Bryan to make Ms. Williams the permanent CEO. "I want her to be named; I think she's been acting in the position, she's been doing the work and carrying it out well and I truly believe that she should be named," he told the Consortium during an interview.

Mr. Francis said he was confident in Ms. Dyma's ability to carry out the task of leading the hospital. Additionally, "I think that the employees support her and she has the confidence of the employees, faculty and staff, so I want her to be named," [he said at the time](#). "Put the woman in place."