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Governor Bryan Provides Hospitals With \$8 Million Each For Nurse Recruitment and Retention

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Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center. By. ERNICE GILBERT, VI CONSORTIUM

Struggling to keep nurses, many of whom left when vaccine mandates were implemented, the Juan F. Luis Hospital and the Schneider Regional Medical Center have been awarded a combined \$16 million to help retain and recruit these essential employees.

That's according to Governor Albert Bryan, who told the Consortium Tuesday that the first tranche of \$3 million each is being released as the hospitals try to manage facilities that are lacking adequate staff and in turn straining those who remain to perform critical work.

The funding also coincides with the exit of many Pafford-hired traveling nurses whose contracts have expired. Those nurses took advantage of attractive compensation offers, including a \$20,000

a month package.

In October, Mr. Bryan acknowledged that the hospitals were under pressure, singling out JFL. "Right now JFL is going through it," he said. "Every single day we're looking for new ways to help them." According to a JFL schedule examined by the Consortium at the time, the hospital's Critical Care Unit had a shortage of 9 nurses from Oct. 3 through the 9th.

Compounding the hospitals' challenges, both facilities are in midst of major changes at the top level. SRMC's Dr. Luis Amaro [has already left](#), and Ms. Williams's exit was said to be scheduled for October though there has been no announcement by the JFL board or Ms. Williams regarding the matter.

The \$16 million is being provided through the \$584 million in ARPA funds tied to the Covid-19 pandemic [announced for the USVI earlier this year](#). The funds can be used to "respond to the public health emergency and address the negative economic impacts of this pandemic," according to Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett.

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