

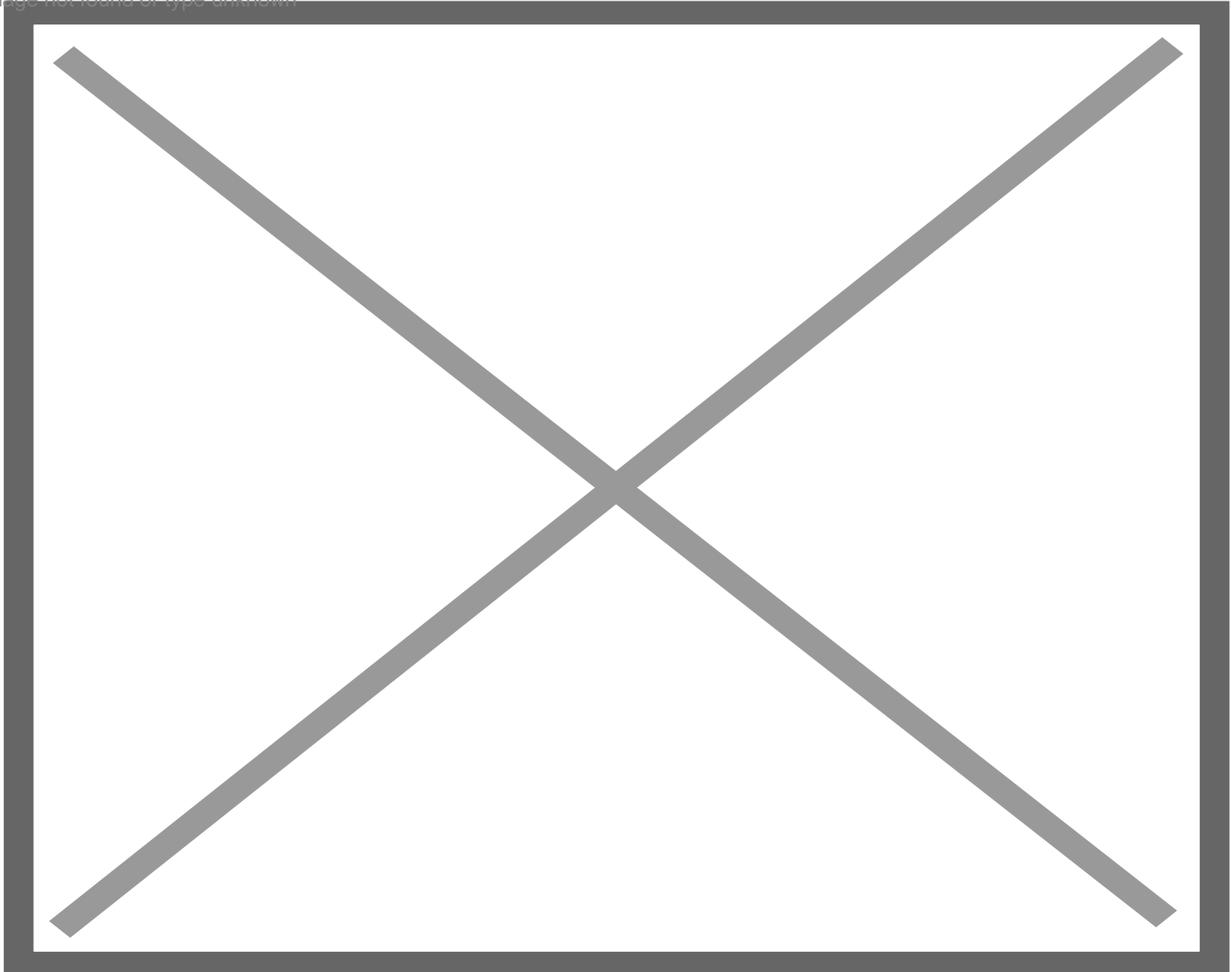
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First HIV Summit in USVI to be Held on St. Croix March 10th and 11th at UVI Campus

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Various local and visiting speakers will present updated clinical guidelines and innovative HIV prevention and treatment approaches when the V.I. Department of Health hosts an HIV Summit at the St. Croix Campus of the University of the Virgin Islands in March.

The two-day event scheduled for March 10th and 11th will bring together primary care providers, allied health care professionals, primary care health teams, community organizations, community health workers, and people living and or caring for others with the disease.

“The Department of Health is very proud of the work which has been done to bring the summit together and to end the HIV epidemic in the U.S. Virgin Islands by 2030,” said Dr. Esther Ellis, D.O.H.'s territorial epidemiologist.

A release D.O.H. issued in February says the department along with its partners are aiming to eliminate HIV and related stigmas while linking Virgin Islanders to modern HIV care and support services.

In the release, Robert Thompson, HIV prevention coordinator for the Dept. of Health Communicable Disease Division, stated, “We are excited to strengthen HIV care services in the territory as we approach our goal of getting to zero and ending the HIV epidemic in the USVI by 2030.”

The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, called UNAIDS, unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. Ellis said the March event will be the first HIV summit to be held in the Virgin Islands, and participants will be both local and regional healthcare providers and advocates working for the education and prevention of HIV.

The summit is occurring weeks after it was announced that a patient with leukemia in the United States has become [the first woman to be cured of HIV](#) after receiving a stem cell transplant.

The case, presented at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in the U.S. city of Denver, was the first involving umbilical cord blood to treat acute myeloid leukemia, which starts in blood-forming cells in the bone marrow.

Since receiving the cord blood, the middle-aged woman of mixed race has been in remission and free of HIV for 14 months, without the need for potent treatments known as antiretroviral therapy. The donor was naturally resistant to the virus that causes AIDS.