

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Meets With Hospital Officials For Status Update on JFL North; Exact Opening Date Remains Elusive

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Governor Albert Bryan, center left, with Lemartec employees along with THRT exec. dir. Darryl Smalls, and Office of Disaster Recovery Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, far right on May 18 at the JFL North site. By. GOV'T HOUSE

Government House said Monday that Governor Albert Bryan met with Juan F. Luis Hospital officials and the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team for updates on the status of JFL North, the temporary units at the hospital whose aim is to serve patients during the time it will take to build the new medical facility.

The updates follow a recent report on the Consortium [detailing a troubling security breach at JFL](#) that resulted in two individuals entering the Emergency Department. Also in the report were details relative to issues with the ED's ambulance bay door.

According to Gov't House, JFL North is in its final phase of construction with the mechanical building, which will house essential life and safety support functions crucial to the operation of the interim facility.

JFL CEO Doug Koch told the Consortium last week that an exact date for the facility's opening couldn't be provided, given the variables involved. He expects, however, that the facility will come online this year.

"We anticipate the move to JFL North later this year. The CMU building which houses all of the critical mechanical components to support JFL North is presently under construction," Mr. Koch said. "Once that is complete, the building needs to be commissioned and certified before we can move in. The exact timeline for these processes is yet unknown, but past experience shows that it will take a few months. We acknowledge the concerns and frustrations with the delays of this temporary hospital. While we have experienced some setbacks up to this point, it is our goal to open this fall."

Asked for clarification on whether the completion of the CMU building along with commissioning and certification process would take a few months separately, or whether he meant a simultaneous completion for all processes, Mr. Koch said, "We are referring to the commissioning and certification process of JFL North upon completion of the CMU building. The CMU building must be complete, before commissioning and certifying agencies can come on site. Although we are working closely with these agencies, their schedules are ultimately outside of our control."

On Monday, Gov't House said contractor Lemartec is expected to complete the CMU building by August 2022 after the longest lead item, the fire suppression system is received, with commissioning to follow immediately thereafter.

JFL officials and the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team hosted the first tabletop exercise in preparation for the move and debriefed Mr. Bryan on its plans to execute the safe and efficient transfer of services, Gov't House said. Discussions began with a brief overview of the 600-page transition manual developed by hospital staff which outlines every aspect of the switch to include guidelines on how to move patients, equipment and other vital operations to JFL North, according to the release. The plans also outline how other essential services will be maintained while the current facility is demolished and rebuilt.

"Getting this facility opened is critical to maintaining the high level of care provided at JFL and is a top priority of our administration," said the governor, according to Gov't House. "I want to thank the JFL and THRT Team for their continued focus and commitment to getting this facility into operation. I am particularly pleased with the level of detail that has gone into the plans to transition an entire hospital in less than 48 hours while maintaining the safety of patients and staff."

The release states that the THRT was established to facilitate the development of a fully integrated hospital system, ensure consistent standards and oversee all design and

construction processes for restoring storm-damaged hospitals. It is comprised of more than 20 healthcare, engineering, procurement and construction professionals. The THRT was engaged to support the JFL North completion and transition as well as JFL, Roy L. Schneider Hospital, Charlotte Kimelman Cancer Institute and the Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Center, according to the release.

“This interim state-of-the-art medical building will serve as an accredited healthcare facility that will also enable the commencement of the demolition of the existing hospital structure, paving the way for the new Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital,” said Darryl Smalls, executive director of the THRT. “With the recent acquisition of five acres of land to the rear of the building, we now have the flexibility to address parking, storage and any other operational requisites.”

Gov't House said that in addition to the completion of the mechanical building, the team discussed the plans for certification from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). JFL Chief Operating Officer Hazel Philbert explained that CMS would be kept abreast of all the pertinent timelines related to this project, including the completion of the mechanical build and the transition of patients to JFL North, according to the release. CMS will be notified of the transition and ultimately determine an undisclosed time to conduct a site visit survey, hospital officials said.