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## FEMA Obligates \$65.7 Million to Human Services to Construct New Queen Louise Home for the Aged Facility in St. Thomas

Disaster Recovery / **Published On September 22, 2022 04:39 PM /**

Staff Consortium **September 22, 2022**

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**The Queen Louise Home for the Aged in St. Thomas. By. THE V.I. OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY.**

The Office of Disaster Recovery announced Thursday that FEMA, through its Public Assistance Program, has awarded the Department of Human Services \$65.7 million to construct a brand new 52,000 square foot, long-term care nursing home on St. Thomas.

According to O.D.R., in September 2021 FEMA made good on its word to provide a decision on the prudent replacement of Queen Louise Home for the Aged by October 2021. The current two-story, 16,000-square-foot facility will be completely replaced to prevailing industry standards.

O.D.R. said now that the territory has received the obligation from FEMA, the Department of Human Services, with the assistance of the Department of Property and Procurement, can continue negotiations to secure land in Sugar Estate to build a state-of-the-art facility and begin designs.

“Patient care is our priority and providing the best care possible as well as maximizing the quality of life is important when serving our most frail elderly. This award represents a tremendous opportunity for the Virgin Islands to continue to provide quality care in a safe environment for individuals who require nursing home treatment,” said D.H.S. Commissioner Kimberley Causey-Gomez. “This funding will allow us to construct a sixty-bed, Skilled Nursing Facility and Nursing Home that meets industry standards and is eligible for certification through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.”

O.D.R. said that when hurricane damages from Irma and Maria in 2017 collided with structural deficits, the ending result was disastrous. The once thirty-bed facility which was spread out over two floors, had to be reduced to a mere seventeen beds. Now housing less than half of its original capacity, the 24-hour care facility is home to about thirteen residents on one single floor.

“This obligation is the long-awaited step towards improving the system of care for our elderly and falls right in line with the Governor’s V.I. Healthy Housing Initiative, which calls for all healthcare facilities to be CMS certified,” said O.D.R. Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien. “Since 2017, the staff of the Department of Human Services has done a commendable job, maintaining services and operations for a population of residents with nowhere else to turn.”

According to the release, in order to continue providing quality care to residents, the facility will undergo temporary repairs while the new Queen Louise is being constructed. The department plans to temporarily relocate residents while these repairs are being made.