

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Four Fire Service Members Complete EMR to EMT Bridge Program

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From left to right: Kevin de Lande, Amani Estrill, Robert Bryan-EMS Fire Chief, Norberto Davis and Michael De Sorbo By. THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

Four members of the V.I. Fire Services recently took one step closer to becoming Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) after completing the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) to EMT Bridge Program, the University of the Virgin Islands has announced.

The EMR to EMT Bridge program provides EMT training to employees that are currently certified as EMRs and prepares them for the next level of certification training, UVI said.

The graduates of the Bridge program are Michael DeSorbo, Kevin de Lande, Norberto Davis, and Amani Estrill.

The EMR Bridge to EMT program was approved by the V.I. Department of Health and meets or exceeds the National Emergency Medical Services Education Standards of a minimum of 150 hours. The course was administered by UVI CELL along with credentialed EMS instructors from Connecticut.

“This program provides a pipeline for EMRs to transition to full-fledged EMTs so that the territory can better meet the critical demand for EMTs,” said Dr. Suzanne Darrow-Magras, UVI CELL director. “We want to make sure that we are creating avenues for our emergency medical personnel to get the training required to sustain and grow our local talent pool,” continued Dr. Magras.

According to UVI, the program began with an online component in May where students learned the core contents of respiratory, cardiac, medical and trauma scenarios, obstetrics and gynecology, as well as EMS Operations. The online coursework was followed by an intensive two-week skills component training in October.

During the two-week session, students had the fortune of working with realistic mannikins at the state-of-the-art Medical Simulation Center on the Albert A. Sheen Campus of the University of the Virgin Islands. The UVI Simulation Center served as the co-host for the training under the leadership of the Director, Charlene Navarro. Students were put through rigorous training and exercises involving medical, respiratory and cardiac arrest scenarios. Students were also able to advance their skills with trauma assessments and treatments and learned how EMS operations work.

As part of the program, the students learned more about Multi- Casualty Incidents (MCIs), the placement and practice of 12-Lead Electrocardiograms (ECGs), how to set up and apply Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) devices for respiratory issues, and learned about human trafficking for first responders and its impact. The Bridge program concluded with a psychomotor exam whereby all four students passed. Once students pass their cognitive exam and complete their preceptorship, they will receive their official National Registry of EMT cards.

“This training will enable the four EMRs to work as the second team member on an ambulance with a certified Paramedic, operate the ambulance and provide basic patient care to members of the community,” said James Bolton, Territorial Training Coordinator for the Virgin Islands Fire Services. “We hope that those completing the class will be inspired to continue with more advanced level EMS provider training in the future,” continued Bolton.

“These four gentlemen were compassionate and dedicated to the learning process,” said Carol L. Stiles, Paramedic and EMS Instructor. “They showed up early every day ready to take on new tasks and fine-tune their BLS Basic Life Support (BLS) skills,” continued Instructor Stiles.