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It's Finally Happening: Ribbon-Cutting For JFL North Set for March 7; Senators Get Tour of Newly-Completed Facility

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JFL North, the 50,000-square-foot temporary hospital on St. Croix. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Ahead of a scheduled ribbon-cutting ceremony for JFL North, members of the Senate Committee on Health, Hospitals and Human Services were provided with an advance tour of sections of the facility, which is now complete.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony for JFL North is slated for March 7, 2023.

The long-awaited temporary facility has a lifespan of seven to ten years, says JFL North Executive Director Darryl Smalls, while the rebuilding of the Juan F. Louis Hospital is expected to take six years before it is complete.

Committee Chair Senator Ray Fonseca praised hospital staff for their work in helping bring this temporary facility online. "I think the hospital has the latest equipment and I hope the Legislature can provide the staff, including registered nurses and other health care providers." Mr. Fonseca expressed hopes that certification from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would soon be forthcoming.

Mr. Smalls called the senators' visit "a tremendous opportunity for information sharing and collaboration between the Legislative branch and the hospitals, which will only benefit the people of the Virgin Islands."

As the transition to the new facility rolls out, senators were told of ongoing challenges, such as with available patient space, and dealing with long-stay "boarders" with no need for hospital care. Nevertheless, the new 54-bed facility boasts a number of upgrades, including built-in alarms in each room, self-turning patient beds, and improved safety features, among others.