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U.S. Virgin Islands to Participate in Pioneering Health Information Exchange Program with CRISP Shared Services

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In an effort to modernize healthcare data exchange, Governor Albert Bryan has entered into an agreement with CRISP Shared Services, a nonprofit that provides technology infrastructure and other core services to Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) across the U.S.

The agreement, formalized through a Letter of Intent, will see the U.S. Virgin Islands participate in a federally funded pilot program designed to establish a HIE in the territory.

The agreement was signed at the recent Office of Health Information Technology summit, solidifying the commencement of a crucial data and interoperability pilot program, according to Government House.

The pilot is the first step in the implementation of the territory's HIE, aimed at facilitating the immediate sharing of health information among a broad network of healthcare entities, the administration said. This includes doctors' offices, hospitals, federally qualified health centers, Department of Human Services Medicaid Division, Department of Health clinics, labs, radiology, identified community-based organizations, and more.

Governor Bryan expressed his optimism regarding the initiative, stating, "This Letter of Intent helps us finally test our ability to connect the health care and services-related data collected by our Government to ensure the proper identification and efficient delivery of services and enhance our care to Virgin Islands residents." Bryan emphasized that the pilot program will give healthcare professionals access to vital information, resulting in quicker decision-making and better treatment outcomes, ultimately reducing the burden on patients.

CRISP Shared Services came under discussion during Bryan's trip to Washington, D.C. in February, where he met with D.C. Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services, Wayne Turnage, among other officials, Government House made known. The meetings centered around best practices in transitioning clinical data exchange towards a more holistic, person-centered public health utility, supporting coordinated data exchange across multiple health services.

Craig Behm, CEO of CRISP Shared Service, expressed his readiness to include the USVI in the pilot, focusing on building the initial technical integration for the federally supported priorities. Behm noted the USVI's unique positioning to execute a rapid modernization of their public health infrastructure.

Michelle M. Francis, OHIT director, conveyed confidence in the program's ability to establish the necessary infrastructure for health information exchange within USVI. The pilot program, according to Francis, will provide "a safe and funded space to make the first tangible, technical steps in building our HIE with a nationally recognized, pre-certified, innovative technology organization."

Mr. Bryan founded the Office of Health Information Technology (OHIT) in 2021, aiming to enhance health and wellness in the USVI through the adoption of transformative health information technology resources.

For more details about the CRISP pilot program, visit www.ohitusvi.com or www.crispsharedservices.org.