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## Virgin Islands Commissions Critical Health Infrastructure Strengthening Project

Release Date: 6 November, 2025



The Government of the Virgin Islands, working in partnership with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission and international humanitarian partner Direct Relief, has implemented a series of vital health infrastructure upgrades to strengthen the Territory's healthcare system.

The upgrades, which include a new oxygen generation and filling system at the Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital, standby power systems at the Jost Van Dyke Clinic and the Romalia Smith Clinic on Anegada, and a pharmacy-grade refrigeration upgrade along with a new generator at the Rosalind Penn Community Clinic. The enhancements are designed to strengthen the Territory's capacity to deliver resilient, reliable, and sustainable healthcare services.

Minister for Health and Social Development Honourable Vincent Wheatley said "This initiative represents not just an investment in infrastructure, but an investment in our people. It ensures that our hospitals and clinics can continue serving the public safely and effectively. Together, we are laying a foundation for a more reliable, sustainable, and responsive health system."

According to Dr. Roxanne Brizan-St. Martin of the OECS Commission the project was born out of the needs identified for strengthening the health system in the BVI and addressing critical gaps in health infrastructure. "The foundational investments in standby power, cold-chain systems, and oxygen generation are essential for ensuring continuity of care and life-saving service delivery, ensuring that healthcare remains accessible and reliable during difficult circumstances," she said.

Acting Chief Executive Officer of the BVI Health Services Authority, Dr. June Samuel, expressed gratitude on behalf of the institution, noting that resilience and sustainability is at the heart of healthcare delivery. "With these new systems, we can ensure continuity of care, protect our patients, and reduce dependency on external resources, which is a true step forward in healthcare transformation for the Virgin Islands," Dr. Samuel stated.

The OECS Direct Relief Health Systems Strengthening Project is part of a regional commitment to building stronger, more climate-resilient health infrastructure across the Eastern Caribbean. The Virgin Islands' successful implementation

demonstrates how local and regional partnerships can produce real, lasting benefits for people by reducing disparities, improving access and ultimately transforming lives.

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**For Additional Information Contact:**

Natasha Lettsome-Humphrey  
Public Health Communications Specialist  
Ministry of Health and Social Development  
Telephone: 468-2286

Email: [nlettsome@gov.vg](mailto:nlettsome@gov.vg)

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