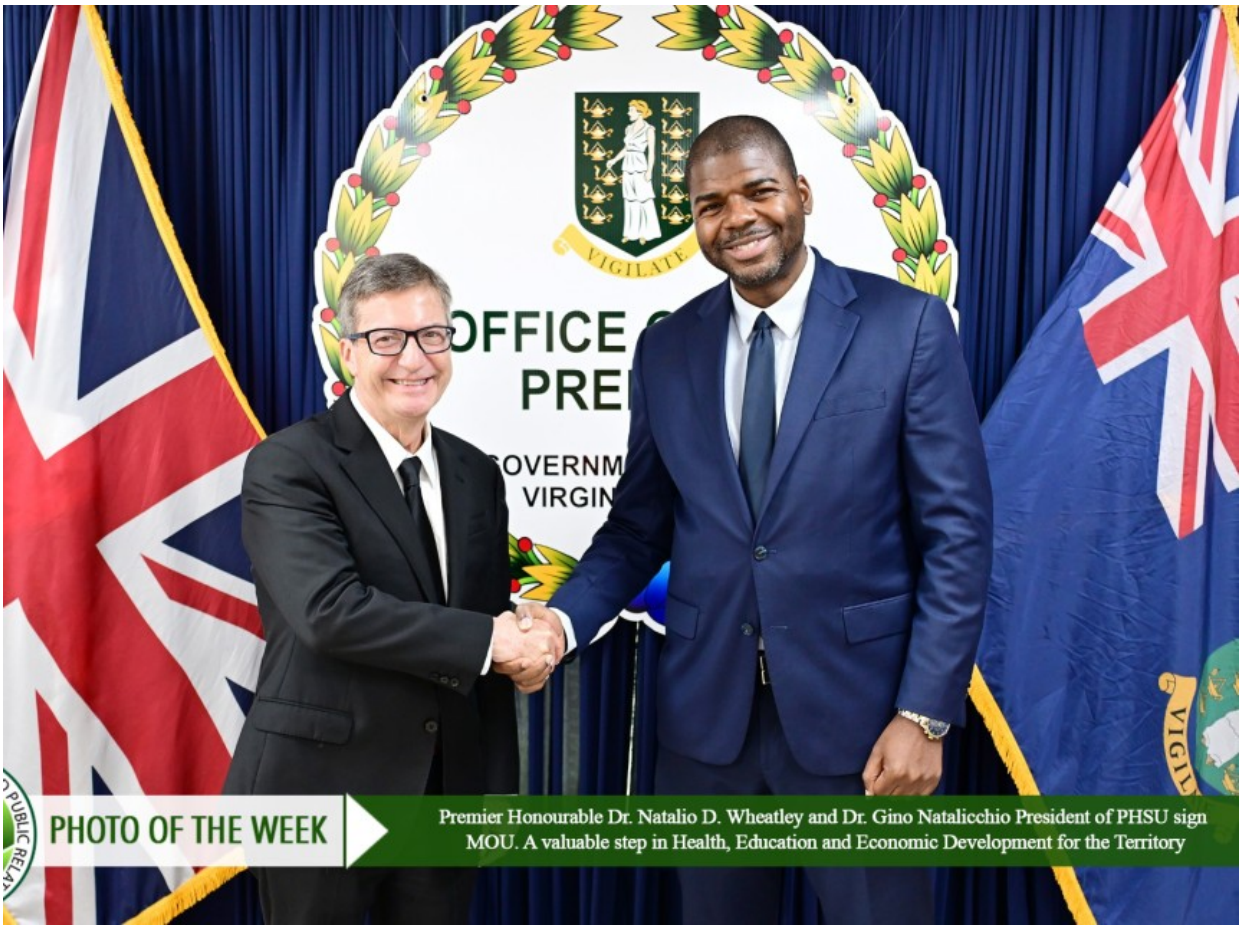
GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

STATEMENT

Tel: (284)468-2730
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Remarks by Premier Wheatley at the Memorandum of Understanding Signing with Ponce Health Sciences University

Release Date: 6 May, 2026



A pleasant good day to each and everyone. I recognise the protocols already established.

Today marks another meaningful step forward in The Virgin Islands' journey to expand opportunities for our people and strengthen our position as a centre of excellence in education. And, we are pleased to have as our companion in this transformative journey, Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) - an institution that has already become an important partner in our national development.

We are gathered for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of The Virgin Islands and PHSU, that will further enhance our relationship.

As many will recall, in March 2025 we launched the PHSU School of Medicine BVI programme at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College. The first cohort began classes in July of that year, and in just ten months we have seen a positive and encouraging response. Students are now able to complete the first and second years of a fully accredited Bachelor's Degree in Medicine right here at home, at the Paraquita Bay campus. Their third and fourth-year clinical rotations will take place at major hospital systems in Puerto Rico and the United States, and upon successful completion, graduates will receive their medical degrees through the PHSU School of Medicine in The Virgin Islands.

This is a transformational opportunity. For many Virgin Islanders, the cost of studying abroad has long been a barrier to pursuing careers in medicine and other specialised fields. By bringing high-quality, internationally recognised programmes to our shores, we are removing those barriers and investing directly in the human capital that will sustain our Territory for generations.

The MOU we sign today outlines the Government's commitments to support this partnership - including measures that will enhance the ease and experience of foreign students, lecturers, and PHSU officials who come to The Virgin Islands to study, teach, and carry out essential administrative functions. These steps strengthen the foundation of the programme and signal our shared intention to see the PHSU School of Medicine BVI grow from strength to strength.

Arrangements like this benefit our Territory in multiple ways. They empower our people to gain skills and qualifications that lead to rewarding and sustainable careers. At the same time, they support our broader economic diversification agenda. Education tourism is a real and emerging opportunity for The Virgin Islands. There are many who would welcome the chance to live and study in one of the world's premier tourism destinations. Their presence contributes to the vibrancy of our economy - supporting property owners, restaurants and bars, supermarkets, transportation providers, wellness services, and countless other businesses.

The Government of The Virgin Islands is very pleased with our relationship with Ponce Health Sciences University. We value the commitment shown by PHSU, and we commend the leadership and staff of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College for their supporting role in advancing this important initiative.

We look forward to continuing our work together as we build and strengthen the PHSU School of Medicine BVI, and as we continue creating opportunities that uplift our people and advance our Virgin Islands.

I thank you.

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Additional Documents or Media

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