GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730
Official Government Website:
https://gov.vg

Economic Development Advances through MOU with Ponce Health Sciences University

Release Date: 6 May, 2026



Progressing Healthcare, Medical Education and Economic Growth

On May 5, 2026, The Government of the Virgin Islands strengthened their partnership with Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), marking another step forward for healthcare, education, and economic development in the Territory.

Premier and Minister with responsibility for economic development, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, described the signing as a transformative milestone in the Territory's development, reinforcing the Government's commitment to building local capacity and increasing opportunities for Virgin Islanders.

"Today marks another meaningful step forward in the Virgin Islands journey to expand opportunities for our people and strengthen our position as a center of excellence in education." the Premier said. "The cost of studying abroad has long been a barrier to pursuing careers in medicine and other specialized fields. By bringing high quality, internationally recognized programs to our shores, we are removing those barriers and investing directly in the human capital that will sustain our territory for generations."

The Premier also highlighted the wider economic benefits of the initiative, noting that the presence of students, faculty and related services contributes to economic diversification, particularly through the growing potential of education tourism.

President of Ponce Health Sciences University, Dr. Gino Natalicchio, expressed his gratitude and reaffirmed the University's commitment to the Territory.

"Today was a very special day after hard work from everybody, especially from the Premier, the Minister and Dr. Perez, our dean." Dr. Natalicchio said. "About 50% of our workforce now in the Health Science University School of Medicine is from the BVI … I think hiring always local talent is the best thing you can do to make a business or endeavor, like this one, very successful"

Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Vincent Wheatley, described the signing as a significant step, noting the Government's continued

investments in infrastructure, legislative reform and long-term healthcare development.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation, Mrs. Natalie Fahie-Smith, noted that the agreement represents a unified vision to advance the Territory.

The MOU also outlines measures to enhance the experience of students, lecturers and administrative personnel, supporting the continued growth and success of the School of Medicine programme. It also sets out mutual commitments to strengthen capacity through investment, training opportunities, policy support and initiatives that advance healthcare quality and stimulate economic growth.

The Government of the Virgin Islands and Ponce Health Sciences University will continue to work collaboratively to strengthen the programme and expand opportunities for Virgin Islanders in the field of medicine.

###

For Additional Information Contact:

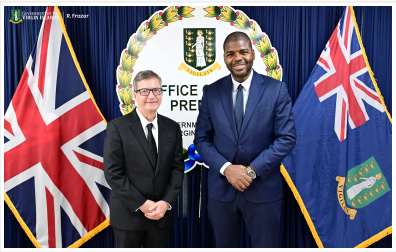
Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation
mfseddt@gov.vg | 284-468-2112

Second Floor, Romasco Place
Road Town, Tortola
Virgin Islands (British) VG1110

Gallery







Additional Documents or Media

- press_release_economic_development_advances_through_mou_with_ponce_health_sciences_