GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

STATEMENT

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REMARKS BY HONOURABLE VINCENT O. WHEATLEY MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT BVI WELLNESS FEST NOVEMBER 7

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I am Vincent O. Wheatley, Minister for Health and Social Development, and I am pleased to lend my voice to endorse the BVI Wellness Fest coming up on November 7th.

People often think about their health when something goes wrong. We visit the doctor when we are sick, change our diet when our numbers become concerning, or become more active when we are told that we need to. But wellness asks us to think differently. It asks us to take care of ourselves before there is a problem.

That is the message behind BVI Wellness Fest 2026.

On Saturday, November 7, the Ministry of Health and Social Development will bring our community together to experience wellness in its many forms. Through physical activity, healthy eating, health screenings, education, mental wellbeing and community connection, we want residents to see that there are many ways to take better care of themselves.

This is especially important as we continue to address the impact of non-communicable diseases in the Virgin Islands. Conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and some cancers are plaguing our community and adversely affecting our healthcare systems.

The risk factors are prevalent, but we also have choices within our control. We can move more. We can make better food choices. We can reduce harmful behaviours. We can manage stress. We can know our health numbers and seek care early.

The good thing is we do not have to change everything overnight. Wellness can begin with one small decision. It may be taking a walk after work, choosing water instead of a sugary drink, adding more fruits and vegetables to your plate, getting your blood pressure checked, taking time to rest or encouraging someone you love to take better care of their health.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development is working to create more opportunities for residents to make those healthier choices and to build environments that support healthier living. BVI Wellness Fest is another step in that direction.

This is more than just a health fair. This is a space where people can move, learn, connect, ask questions, have fun and discover what wellness can look like in their own lives.

I therefore invite individuals, families, workplaces and communities across the Virgin Islands to join us on Saturday, November 7 from 7:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. for BVI Wellness Fest.

BVI Wellness Fest will offer a lively, family-friendly day filled with health, wellness, movement, tasting, music, and fun.

Activities will include:

- Music: Music throughout the event, creating an energetic atmosphere
- Nutrition Zone: Local farmers, health-conscious food vendors and tasting stations.
- Health & Wellness Zone: Preventive health screenings, health education, mental wellness support, massage therapy, chiropractic services, and other wellness resources.
- Kids & Family Zone: Inflatables, face painting, and interactive wellness activities for children and families.
- Physical Activity Zone: Instructor-led yoga, aerobics, stretching and mobility sessions, wellness movement classes.

The overall expectation is that attendees leave with **greater awareness and knowledge of NCD risk factors, increased knowledge of healthy lifestyle practices, greater motivation to participate in physical activity and make healthier food choices, and improved access to preventive health services.**

Come as you are. Find something that works for you, but most importantly, start where you are and keep moving towards better health.

Together, we can build a healthier Virgin Islands one choice, one step and one person at a time. Bring a friend and see you at the BVI Wellness Fest where you

will experience wellness your way.

Thank you, and may God continue to bless the people of The Virgin Islands.

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