



**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE VINCENT O. WHEATLEY
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
IN OBSERVANCE OF
WORLD DIABETES DAY**

FRIDAY 14th NOVEMBER, 2025

Today, The Virgin Islands joins the global community in observing World Diabetes Day 2025 under the theme “Diabetes Across Life Stages.”

This year’s theme highlights the reality that diabetes affects people from all walks of life. It does not discriminate, affecting individuals of every age, gender and background, from our youngest children to our most senior citizens. That is why it calls for a unified and comprehensive response from all of us.

Diabetes remains one of the most significant health challenges affecting our Territory and the wider Caribbean. It is estimated that **over 4,000 people in the Virgin Islands are living with diabetes**, many of whom are still undiagnosed. Across the Americas, more than **112 million adults** are living with the condition, with **up to 40 percent unaware** of their diagnosis. These figures are deeply concerning, but they also strengthen our determination to act.

Through the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the Government of The Virgin Islands remains steadfast in its commitment to preventing diabetes, strengthening early detection, and ensuring equitable access to care and treatment for all who need it.

We are working diligently to:

- Expand community-based programmes, including the BVI Moves initiative, to help more residents understand their risk and take early action;
- Strengthen primary health care services to deliver timely diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care;
- Ensure consistent availability of essential medicines and insulin across our health facilities;
- **Promote healthy lifestyle education** in our schools, workplaces and communities, supported by tools such as the **BVI Eat Well Guide and the Red Loud Campaign**; and
- Support persons living with diabetes through counselling, nutrition guidance, and self-management programmes.

These efforts reflect our national commitment to a life-course approach that supports good health from childhood through adulthood, and into the senior years.

Our goal is to treat diabetes while empowering every person in our Territory to live well, promote prevention, and support healthy choices at every stage of life.

We envision a Virgin Islands where:

- Every child grows up with access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity;
- Every adult understands their risk and takes proactive steps toward wellness; and
- Every senior has access to affordable, high-quality care.

This vision aligns with the global call from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to strengthen prevention and ensure that no one is left behind.

By 2030, W-H-O has challenged all nations to reach ambitious coverage targets:

- 80% of people with diabetes diagnosed

- 80% of those diagnosed achieving good blood-sugar control
- 80% of people maintaining healthy blood pressure
- 60% of adults over 40 on statin therapy – which essentially involves taking medication to lower cholesterol levels, by reducing the liver’s production of “bad” LDL cholesterol.
- 100% of people with type 1 diabetes having access to affordable insulin and monitoring tools.

The Virgin Islands is committed to doing its part to achieve these global goals. While diabetes is a serious condition, it is not without hope. Type 2 diabetes is largely preventable through simple, daily actions, such as eating healthy, staying physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding tobacco use.

I encourage every resident, regardless of age, to get screened so that you are aware of your blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, and other important health indicators, and can take proactive steps to protect your health. I also call on families, schools, churches, and community groups to serve as champions for healthy living, inspiring and supporting one another in making healthier choices.

To every person living with diabetes, you are not alone. The Government of The Virgin Islands stands with you, and we are working to ensure that the care, medicines, and support you need remain within your reach.

On this **World Diabetes Day**, let us renew our shared commitment to build a healthier Virgin Islands where every generation, at every stage of life, can thrive.

On 28th November, let us join the BVI Diabetes Association in **Painting the Town Blue** to raise awareness and show our support. Together, let us move forward with knowledge, compassion, and unity, because diabetes affects us all and together, we can overcome it.