GOVERNMENT HOUSE
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 29, 2022
Press Contact
Richard Motta
340-474-2399
www.vi.gov
richard.mottajr@go.vi.gov



Governor Albert Bryan Jr. addresses the Office of Health Information Technology Digital Health Summit this week on St. Thomas.

Office of Health Information Technology Hosts Digital Health Summit

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — The Office of the Governor's Office of Health Information Technology (OHIT) hosted its first Digital Health Summit July 26-27 at the Charles Turnbull Regional Library on St. Thomas and brought together more than 20 leading international and national health IT businesses, who sponsored the event and exhibited their solutions to summit attendees.

Speakers also flew in from across the country from organizations like Google, Public Consulting Group, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, Howard University, Blue Cirrus Consulting, Microsoft, Meditech, Zane Technologies, CRISP Shared Services, Prince Georges County Health Department, CommHIT, Audacious Inquiry, Office of the National Coordinator, Foley and Lardner, Electronic Healthcare Network Accreditation Commission (EHNAC), viNGN, Bureau of Information Technology and more.

Additional representatives from a variety of local and federal government organizations along with private sector leaders converged on the library to discuss the progression of telemedicine, challenges and needs related to interoperability and secure data exchange and the advent of the USVI Health Information Exchange (HIE) in the Territory.



OHIT Executive Director Michelle Francis interviews Public Consulting Group's Fred Forrer during a special edition of the Government House program "The Press Box."

The objective of the summit was to equip providers and healthcare professionals with the information, access to resources, and subject matter experts to navigate the evolving health IT landscape and make informed decisions that will transform the way health care is delivered in the Territory through secure technologies.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. established the Office of Health Information Technology in 2021 and it is led by Executive Director Michelle Francis.

"The Office of Health Information Technology is a key component to the Bryan-Roach Administration's 'Healthier Horizons' initiative to greatly enhance the quality of health care choices and resources available to Virgin Islanders," Governor Bryan said.

According to Governor Bryan's executive order: "The Office of Health IT will serve as the nucleus for innovative and transformative health Information Technology Resources and solutions across the USVI in order to improve the health and wellness of Virgin Islanders. The overarching goals of the Office of Health IT are guided by the Mission of the Health IT Workgroup Plan: To design and implement an integrated health care system that uses health information technology to improve the health and wellness of U.S. Virgin Islands residents."



Dr. Ernest Carter, Chief Health Officer of Maryland's Prince George County Health Department, was the Digital Health Summit keynote speaker.

The summit's keynote speaker was Dr. Ernest Carter, Chief Health Officer of Maryland's Prince George County Health Department. Dr. Carter started the first Telehealth module in USVI in the 1990s and is the health officer for Prince George's County Health Department (PGCHD) with more than 38 years of experience in direct patient care, more than 25 years of experience in the fields of telemedicine and health IT as well as more than seven years in public health. Dr. Carter was chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at Washington Adventist Hospital and Mercy Philadelphia Hospital. Dr. Carter has an AB degree in Physics from Harvard

College, a MD degree from Harvard Medical School, and a Ph.D. degree in bioengineering from the University of Pennsylvania.

In addition to providing updates on the progress of the HIE and interoperability in general, the summit was an, engaging, thought-provoking and informative event with enthusiastic responses from attendees. Other notable presenters participating in the first USVI Digital Health Summit 22 included swyMed, Redmane, eClinicalWorks, Gainwell, Cognosante, UVI and UVI CERT and UVI CELL, Schneider Regional Medical Center, Juan Luis Hospitals, Amazon's local technology partner, Frederiksted Health Centers, St. Thomas East End Medical Center, Department of Labor, Department of Health and the Department of Human Services.



Governor Bryan and Lt. Governor Tregenza Roach attended a reception at Government House on St. Thomas hosted by OHIT Executive Director Michelle Francis and attended by the team from Public Consulting Group, a primary sponsor of the Digital Health Summit.

"This summit provided a critical opportunity for bi-directional education. Not only did we learn from the experts coming to our shores, but we educated our guests on unique health IT challenges, resources and opportunities present in the Caribbean," Executive Director Francis said. "The Office is bringing together all the stakeholders necessary to create coalitions, partnerships and alliances that can drive innovation and achieve true transformation in healthcare for the public good. This inaugural summit was significant in many respects. Not only are we gathering in person while also livestreaming, but we are bringing a first of its kind summit to the Territory. The summit aimed to draw upon both the progress and failures of the past in order to chart a course to address unprecedented challenges as experienced with Covid19."

The event was streamed live on the OHIT's Facebook page and also was available each evening on the Government House YouTube page. For more information, visit the Office of Health Information Technology website: www.ohitusvi.com/summit and Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ohitusvi for details, downloadable materials and to watch sessions again.

The Bryan-Roach Administration is investing in the Territory's people, infrastructure and future through transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in the government and ensuring that recovery projects are completed as quickly as possible. Visit transparency.vi.gov

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