

PRESS RELEASE

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Health Ministry Secures Grant To Improve Infrastructure

Release Date: 4 February, 2025

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development has secured a grant from the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) supported by Direct Relief.

The grant was secured under the Enhancing Health Infrastructure and Resilience Project (EHIR), in the sum of USD250, 000 and is intended to assist with the development and improvement of health infrastructure and effectively address health challenges associated with climate change in the Territory.

The funds will also be used for the procurement of Standby Backup power for Public Healthcare Infrastructure, Cold Chain Strengthening, and Medical Oxygen Generation.

Permanent Secretary Miss Tasha Bertie highlighted the importance of reliable access to critical resources particularly in times of crisis to ensure resilient health systems and saving lives.

Ms. Bertie said, “With the Installation of Backup Power Systems, we can ensure the reliable continuity of primary healthcare infrastructure during and after significant disruptions or short-term power outages.”

Ms. Bertie added, “We intend to establish a dependable backup power supply by installing generators at six (6) select health centres. Also, we are seeking to upgrade the cold storage and refrigeration infrastructure to guarantee the safe storage of vaccines, pharmaceuticals, blood products, and other temperature-sensitive medical supplies.”

The Permanent Secretary further stated that the grant will help to ensure adequate redundancy and reliability of medical oxygen supplies at the Dr. D. Orlando Smith hospital.

Ms. Bertie explained, “By installing an oxygen generation plant at the facility, the project will reduce reliance on imported oxygen, thereby ensuring a consistent and sustainable supply of medical oxygen for patient care, particularly for those suffering from respiratory illnesses during emergencies or disasters.”

The project is anticipated to conclude at the end of April. Representatives from the OECS Secretariat and Direct Relief are expected to visit the Virgin Islands at various intervals during the project implementation to conduct and/or engage in project monitoring activities.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains committed in finding means of improving the health infrastructure for the people of the Virgin Islands, especially those on the Sister Islands and communities that have been historically isolated by disruptions to transport and communications after major disasters.