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Statement By Honourable Sharie B. De Castro on the Launch Of Ponce Health Sciences University School Of Medicine In The BVI

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Minister For Education, Youth Affairs & Sports

Monday, 24 March 2025

Launch Of Ponce Health Sciences University School Of Medicine In The BVI

Today, we are witnessing a breakthrough—a pivotal moment in the evolution of medical education in the British Virgin Islands. The launch of the Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) School of Medicine in the BVI is not merely an expansion of academic opportunity; it is a vital infusion of knowledge, talent, and progress into our healthcare ecosystem.

Medicine itself is about connection—linking science with service, knowledge with care, and territories with well-being. That same principle guides us today. PHSU is forging a dynamic partnership with H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) to provide an academic home for future medical professionals, ensuring that education and innovation thrive in the BVI. Through this collaboration, we are creating a centre where students—both local and international—will train, learn, and ultimately contribute to the advancement of healthcare in the region.

Why the BVI? Because just as a healthy body requires strong circulation, a thriving territory needs a robust, well-trained medical workforce. We recognise the urgent global demand for medical professionals, and we believe the BVI is uniquely positioned to play a crucial role in filling that need. By establishing this program here, we are ensuring that the flow of medical expertise is not only sustained but strengthened, benefiting the entire region.

This initiative is more than just about education—it is about impact. The presence of international students coming to the BVI for medical training is a prescription for economic growth. They will live here, engage with our businesses, contribute to the territory, and enrich the local economy. This is a long-term investment that extends far beyond the classroom—it bolsters our healthcare services, creates jobs, and cements the BVI’s status as a hub for academic and professional excellence.

And for our own people, we are ensuring that financial barriers do not stand in the way of potential. I would like to take this opportunity to thank PHSU for partnering with the Ministry of Education to make two scholarships available to two BVI students each year, for the first four years, with full tuition coverage, ensuring that our homegrown talent has the opportunity to rise and serve. This is not just a scholarship—it is a commitment to the future of healthcare in the Virgin Islands.

This milestone is the result of a shared vision—between PHSU, the Government of the BVI, and our partners—who recognise that reimagining education means reimagining healthcare. Accreditation, partnerships, and dedicated leadership have brought us to this moment, proving that when we invest in education, we are truly investing in life.

This medical school is for every student who has ever dreamed of donning a white coat, for every patient who has ever needed a medical professional to believe in them, and for every territory that has longed for quality healthcare within reach.

As we celebrate this milestone, let us think of it as a heartbeat—steady, strong, and full of promise. Let us ensure that it continues to beat, not just for today, but for generations to come. Congratulations, PHSU and welcome to the Virgin Islands!

Thank you.