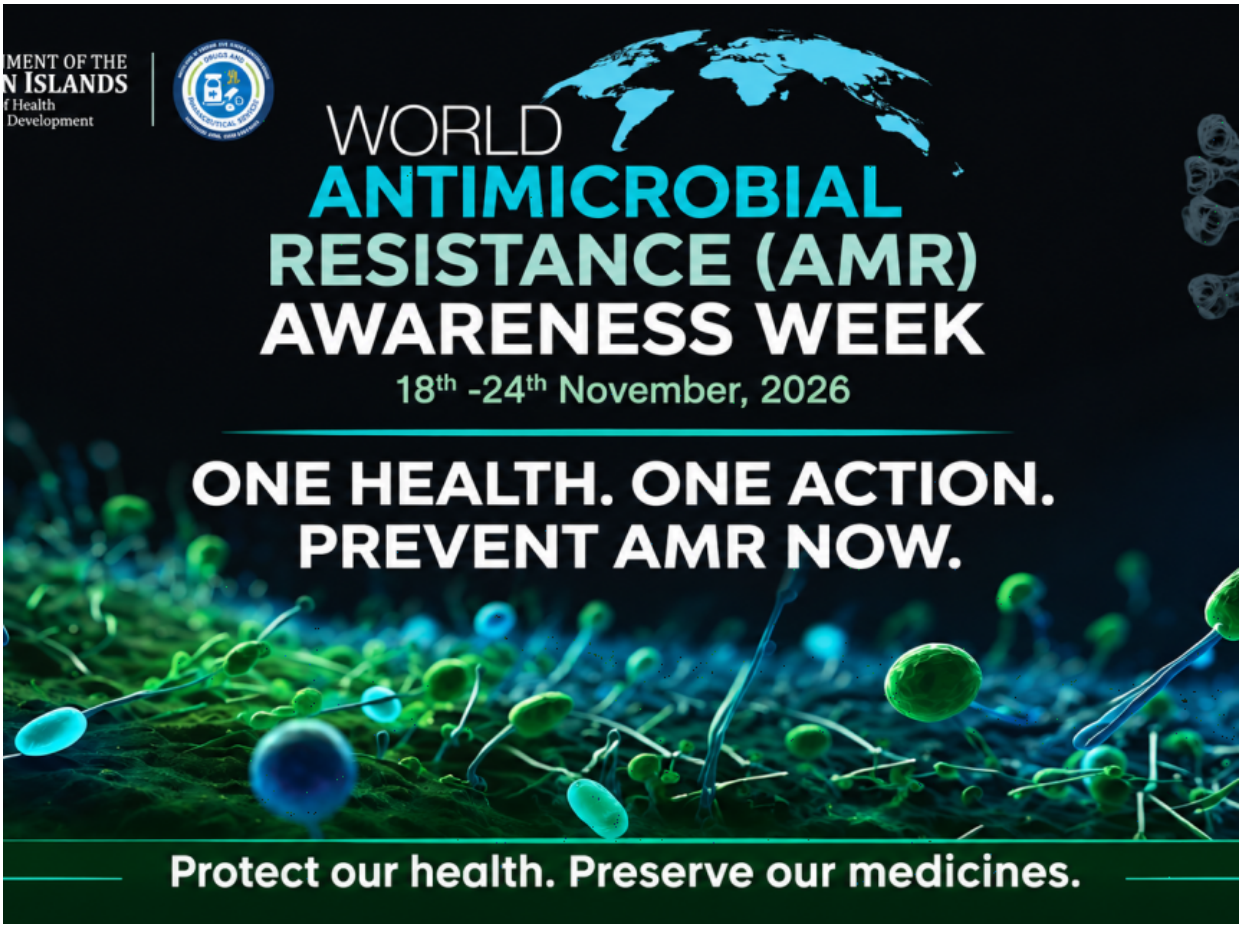
GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Urges Action to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development is urging residents to take action to prevent antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a growing public health threat that can render essential medicines ineffective and make common infections increasingly difficult to treat.

The call comes as the Virgin Islands joins the global observance of World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week from 18 to 24 November 2026, under the theme, “One Health, One Action: Prevent AMR Now.”

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites no longer respond to the medicines used to treat them. This can lead to prolonged illness, increased healthcare costs and a greater risk of serious complications and death.

Chief of Drugs and Pharmaceutical Services Mrs. Gracia Wheatley-Smith emphasised the importance of responsible medicine use in protecting public health.

“Antimicrobial resistance threatens our ability to effectively treat infections, do surgeries and transplants and protect lives. Every individual has a role to play in preserving the effectiveness of our medicines. Simple actions, such as using antibiotics responsibly and preventing infections, can make a significant difference in protecting the health of our community.”

The Ministry is encouraging residents to use antibiotics only when prescribed by a qualified healthcare professional, follow treatment instructions and avoid sharing medicines or using leftover antibiotics. Practising good hygiene and keeping vaccinations up to date are also important measures in preventing infections. Mrs. Wheatley-Smith is also asking that pet owners be careful when administering antibiotics and to use gloves during the procedure to minimize un-necessary contact with the medication.

This year's theme reinforces the connection between human, animal and environmental health and the need for a coordinated approach to preventing antimicrobial resistance.

As part of the observance, the Ministry will undertake a public education campaign featuring awareness messages, educational activities and a GIS report. Residents are also invited to test their knowledge through an AMR crossword puzzle that will be on the Ministry of Health and Social Development Facebook page. The answers to the puzzle will be placed on the Ministry's Facebook page on Tuesday 24 November.

For additional information, persons may contact the Chief of Drugs and Pharmaceutical Services at (284) 468-9850 or grwheatley-smith@gov.vg.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains committed to protecting and promoting the health and social well-being of the people of the Virgin Islands through effective policies, sustainable programmes and strategic partnerships that support a safe, healthy and resilient society.

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