



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
340-774-0001

PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

A PROCLAMATION

Public Health Week provides a focused opportunity for residents and public health professionals to engage with Virgin Islands Department of Health and its mission to maintain a healthy community. Good health must be a community-wide priority and it is imperative for everyone to be aware of the programs and services provided by the Virgin Islands Department of Health, which encourages the public to exercise, maintain a nutritional and healthy diet, and to seek preventive care and treatment. Public Health Week also provides the opportunity for residents to take ownership of their health by asking pertinent questions of their physicians, immunizing against infectious disease, and guarding against diseases endemic to the Virgin Islands such as Dengue Fever.

The statistics are alarming. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States Virgin Islands contributing to 29 deaths per 1,000 people. Diabetes Mellitus is the single most important risk factor for heart disease among all ethnic groups in the United States Virgin Islands. Persons age 50 and older have a 291 percent increased likelihood of having heart disease compared to younger persons. Stroke is the third leading cause of death, next to homicides and diabetes, in the United States Virgin Islands. High blood sugar is associated with a 265 percent increased risk of stroke among Virgin Islanders and persons age 60 and older have a 383 percent greater risk of having stroke. Smoking is associated with 47 percent greater likelihood of being diagnosed with stroke.

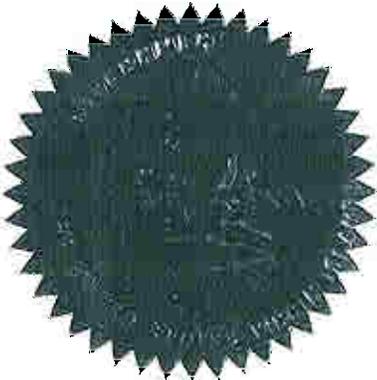
The Virgin Islands Department of Health recognizes that in our community many health disparities exist and can be attributed to our eating habits, sedentary lifestyle and lack of routine access to primary health care and preventative health programs by our residents. Programs and services offered by the Virgin Islands Department of Health benefit all residents regardless of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status and are essential to a strong, successful health care

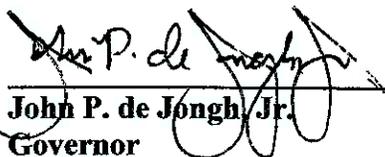
system and include chronic disease prevention, public health preparedness, environmental health, diabetes control and prevention, and emergency medical services. These programs help people stay healthy by protecting residents from infectious disease, environmental and workplace hazards, chronic disease, unintentional injuries and violence. Programs targeting infants, toddlers, children, women, maternal health, immunization and family planning improve infant mortality rates and childhood immunization rates, promote child and adolescent health, including obesity and reduce teen pregnancies and child abuse. The Virgin Islands Department of Health educates and encourages residents to adopt healthy behaviors through specific programs on tobacco cessation, diabetes education, and wellness promotion in the work place. Additionally, the Virgin Islands Department of Health has outreach events where free screenings on glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure, free flu vaccines, and where HIV testing are offered to those uninsured and underinsured in order to prevent chronic illnesses and premature death.

Nationally, this year's theme for Public Health Week is "A Healthier America Begins Today: Join the Movement" which is intended to encourage people to take preventative measure towards improving their health. The Virgin Islands Department of Health will continue to promote healthy living and routine preventative healthcare throughout the year.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John P. de Jongh, Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby proclaim the week of April 2 – 8, 2012, as Public Health Week within the United States Virgin Islands. I challenge and encourage the people of the Virgin Islands to join the movement underway and adopt a healthy and active lifestyle, starting by taking part in the health walk and health fair held during this week.

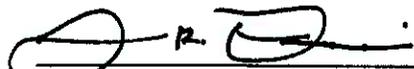
IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Seal of the Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States to be affixed at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, this 1st day of April, 2012, A.D.





John P. de Jongh, Jr.
— Governor

Attest:



Gregory R. Francis
Lieutenant Governor