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DHS Staff Strengthens Shelter Management Capabilities Through Comprehensive PULSE Training

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS - On Thursday, September 5, 2024, the **USVI Department of Human Services (DHS)** completed a specialized training session on the Patient Unified Lookup System for Emergencies (**PULSE**), marking a significant step in enhancing the territory's ability to manage emergency shelters during disasters. The training, part of the Department's **Emergency Support Function 6 (ESF6) Mass Care** unit, equips DHS staff with critical tools to effectively manage admissions, departures and critical patient movement whenever shelters must operate.

The training was led by Tom Fitzgerald, Data Integration Technician for Emergency Preparedness & Response at **PointClickCare**, the leading electronic health record (EHR) technology partner for North America's long-term post-acute care (**LTPAC**) and senior care industry.

DHS staff engaged in comprehensive learning sessions that covered the following key PULSE functionalities:

- ✓ **Emergency Census:** Participants were trained to electronically capture shelter check-ins and check-outs, improving management of shelter populations and ensuring **real-time coordination** with healthcare providers. This is particularly valuable for maintaining continuity of care for displaced individuals and for tracking movement of persons that may require transfer to another location/facility.
- ✓ **Patient Search:** Staff learned how authorized personnel can securely access clinical care documents and medication histories for individuals arriving at shelters, for permitted uses such as treatment. All data access is role-based and strictly vetted by the DHS, adhering to **Federal, State, and Local laws** ensuring that sensitive health information remains protected.

This cutting-edge system, supported by PointClickCare, integrates with national **health information exchange** networks, providing the U.S. Virgin Islands with a robust tool to enhance disaster care coordination. By connecting the territory's healthcare providers to a broader network of hospitals, labs, pharmacies, and other care providers, the system will help ensure timely and accurate care for displaced residents during emergencies. **PULSE** also complies with strict privacy and security standards, including HIPAA regulations.

Commissioner Averil George of the Department of Human Services stated, "This training represents a crucial investment in our territory's disaster preparedness. The **PULSE** system gives us the ability to provide faster, more coordinated care to our community when they need it most, ensuring that our most vulnerable populations are not left behind during emergencies."

With this new training, the USVI Department of Human Services is better positioned to respond effectively to future disasters, leveraging cutting-edge technology to safeguard the health and well-being of residents across the territory.

For more information about the Department of Human Services and its disaster preparedness initiatives, please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi or on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/usvidhs>).

The Department of Human Services (VIDHS) exists to provide social services to members in our community with diverse needs. In times of national uncertainty and hardship we act as a safety-net and exist to inspire hope and empower change through non-judgmental, quality delivery of needed services and resources

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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