



# VIRGIN ISLANDS

The **Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant** provides funding for health problems in the Virgin Islands that range from stroke to rape. Approximately 99% of the state's funding for health programs is provided by PHHS Block Grant funds.

These funds allow the Virgin Islands to use dollars **where** we need them, **when** we need them to protect the public's health. The Virgin Islands PHHS Block Grant Advisory Committee has made cardiovascular disease the priority because it is the leading cause of death. Two community-based organizations have been funded to implement interventions in their respective communities. Program examples include the following:



### **Stroke—Cardiovascular Health—Screening**

PHHS Block Grant funds are used to support cardiovascular health screenings. At the Agriculture Food Fair and at other community events, approximately 713 persons were screened.



### **Stroke – Cardiovascular Health—Community Participation**

PHHS Block Grant funds are used to empower communities in the area of cardiovascular health. Mini-grants were awarded to two faith-based organizations, one of which created a cardiovascular risk reduction program that achieved 95% participation. As part of this program, a heart-healthy recipe guide was published, free exercise classes were offered, and a walk-a-thon was held.



### **Rape or Attempted Rape—Rape Prevention**

Sexual assault is one of the greatest concerns facing women and children in the territory. Rape crisis centers treat more than 200 persons each year. PHHS Block Grant funds are used to teach youth to recognize the signs of child sexual abuse and increase their awareness of sexual crimes. Working with two community-based organizations, about 3,500 students ages 3–17 and 500 college students were educated on sexual violence prevention.

## Virgin Islands Department of Health

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## Providing Basic Healthcare Services to the Williams Delight Community with PHHS Block Grant Dollars

### Issue:

Images of large pot holes, tiny public housing homes for low-income or unemployed families, and freestanding water stagnant in the street due to an improper draining system are probably not the images that come to mind when most people think of St. Croix. These are, however, the reality of the Williams Delight Community located on the west side of the Island. This community has the highest crime rates in St. Croix and in the Virgin Islands, and unfortunately, signs of hope for a brighter future are hidden or masked by the blight of social, educational, and health issues.

“Mrs. Smith” is a shy, reserved woman in her forties and represents many women in this community. She has nine children, all of whom are boys, ranging in age from 6 to 30 years old. For more than 20 years this family lived in a shack, in the Williams Delight community, with no running water, electricity, or phone. Mrs. Smith cannot read and has never held a job. Mr. Smith is extremely dominating and is known to be abusive. He rarely allows his wife to leave the house except to go to church on Sunday. Like so many women in this community, Mrs. Smith has not been receiving regular physical exams and health care. So, how can we better serve women like Mrs. Smith who are most likely in serious need of proper health care?

### Intervention:

The St. Croix Community United Methodist Church (CCMU), an institution in this community for more than 50 years, has proven to be the glimmer of hope to many residents in the Williams Delight Community. These residents largely trust the church and are not skeptical in receiving help from the church, as they are in many other cases.

Through a mini-grant provided by Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant, St. Croix Community United Methodist Church has—

- Provided church members with individual health screenings.
- Given nutrition profiles to each individual screened on how they can improve their diet.
- Provided cooking classes on how to prepare healthy meals.
- Held community health fairs.
- Progress meetings on how participants are meeting their nutrition and physical activity goals.



### Impact:

After some convincing, Mr. Smith permitted Mrs. Smith to receive a health screening from the church. During the initial screening, Mrs. Smith was told that her blood pressure was dangerously high - hypertension stage. The nurse advised Mrs. Smith to visit a doctor or seek help at the local clinic. Mrs. Smith stated she could not afford to go see a doctor and that she had no transportation. The CCMU provided her transportation to the clinic, which offers free and/or reduced services and the CCMU will cover the medical expenses if necessary.

This story illustrates the critical care provided by through using PHHS Block Grant funds to implement an effective health program in a community of low resources, but of high needs.

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