

DRCVI ANNUAL REPORT 2019

*“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”
Audre Lorde*



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MISSION STATEMENT

Advance the legal rights of people with disabilities, support and empower families and provide training and information that promotes the overall health and educational development of children and youth.

MORE MEDICAID FUNDING FOR THE VI

2019 will be remembered as the year in which DRCVI had devoted considerable attention and resources to informing our community about the expanded opportunity for people to apply and qualify for the territory’s Medicaid program. Medicaid is the public health insurance program funded by the federal and territorial governments that provides health care coverage to eligible low-income individuals or families. It is operated by the V.I. Department of Human Services.

For several years the Virgin Islands’ Medicaid program was subject to a 55% limit or cap on the amount it could receive for Medicaid support from the federal government. The territory had been expected to match the federal government’s Medicaid contribution. The federal matching fund requirement as it related to Virgin Islanders had proven to be unduly burdensome and medical care was out of reach for thousands of individuals. In earlier years, an individual with an income of more than \$5,500 per year would not have been eligible for Medicaid assistance, and a household of 5 individuals was not eligible for Medicaid if their annual income exceeded \$9,500 a year- well below the federal poverty guidelines.

Through the successful efforts of our Delegate to Congress, Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett, and the advocacy of many other individuals, that is no longer the case. The U.S. Virgin Islands’ Medicaid program has expanded its eligibility requirements allowing more individuals and families to qualify for the Medicaid program. During 2019, DRCVI in collaboration with the territory’s Medicaid program aggressively took to the airwaves, produced and disseminated public service announcements in an effort to inform the public of the opportunity to seek and, if eligible, obtain Medicaid assistance. This important political victory will help to promote a more healthy community in the wake of our post-disaster environment.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In June 2019 received an Advocacy Award from the National Disability Rights Center (NDRN) in recognition of DRCVI’s weekly radio outreach program, Ability Radio.
- Updated and improved the drcvi.org website.
- Researched and produced for distribution an Employment and Disability Resource Guide.
- Aired public service announcements in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole (over a 6-month period) on the subject of health and wellness in a post-disaster environment, and the expanded opportunity for people to qualify for the Territory’s Medicaid program.
- Produced and aired on 4 radio stations 576 public service announcements about the Social Security Administration’s newly created Representative Payee Program.
- Solicited 306 individual responses to DRCVI’s Community needs survey.
- Presented 22 workshops on such topics as voting rights, special education, employment rights, self-advocacy, and disaster preparedness and recovery had 66,481 visits or “hits” to its website (drcvi.org).
- Monitored 30 residential facilities in the territory to ensure that the rights of residents with disabilities are protected.



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The contents of this report are solely the responsibility of DRCVI and do not necessarily represent the official view of any of these agencies.

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