

2022 NPCR VIRGIN ISLANDS SUCCESS STORY

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Data Contingency Plan

National Program of Cancer Registries SUCCESS STORY

SUMMARY

The United States Virgin Islands (USVI) is a piece of heaven on earth. However, it is located within the Hurricane Belt, meaning that every year, from May 1 through November 30, the territory is at risk of being affected by extreme weather events, such as hurricanes. In June 2017, VICCR secured funding from NPCR for operation of a cancer registry for the first time. In September 2017 Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated the islands. The Department of Health facility housing the Cancer Registry was destroyed. Accessing servers where our data had been stored was intermittent and difficult. No data were available as the registry moved around until a more permanent location could be secured. Result of a valuable lesson learned: we are writing this story as Hurricane Fiona is passing by and we now have unrestricted access to our cancer database. This is the result of teamwork, planning and creating a data contingency plan that allows us to access our database without any interruption.

CHALLENGE

The main challenge to having a well-established secure database is our geography. The USVI is an unincorporated territory of the United States, consisting of three main islands, St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John, and many other surrounding minor islands. The Health Information Technology (HIT) office is located on the island of St Thomas, while the VICCR office is located on the island of St Croix. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, many employees were forced to work remotely. We discovered we were unable to connect to the HIT networks while working remotely, and if we needed to do so, air travel between islands was necessary. VICCR personnel began working in local copies of the database, without the option to connect to the same live database.

SOLUTION

In 2021, the VICCR established a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the University of Utah, specifically with the Rocky Mountain Cancer Data System (RMCDS) team. The MOA required RMCDS to provide an abstracting software environment and much-needed IT support for the cancer database. The relationship, communication, and commitment between the RMCDS team and the VICCR team developed into more than a software/maintenance agreement. RMCDS now houses the cancer database in a live environment within the secure framework of the University of Utah servers, allowing multiple-user access to the same database at the same time regardless of the weather conditions in the Caribbean.

RESULTS

This change ensured an uninterrupted connection to the cancer database during the last hurricane event. It has also allowed for back-ups to be stored in multiple secure locations (Utah, Virgin Islands). This redundancy greatly always improves the guarantee of data availability. And it allows all VICCR staff to connect simultaneously to the same live database using secure protocols including GlobalProtect VPN, and two-factor authentication.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Having a partner like RMCDS, who has been working in the cancer registry field since 1968 will help us build the capacity and support required to ensure the operations of this fledgling central cancer registry for years to come.

REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION:

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[Virgin Islands Central Cancer Registry Website](#)



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