Good morning Madam Chair Janelle Sarauw and other Members of the Committee on Disaster Recovery and Infrastructure of the 34th Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands, other Senators present, and members of the listening and viewing audience. I am Jenifer O’Neal, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) and I appear pursuant to your invitation to provide testimony on the recovery of the Territory’s healthcare facilities following the catastrophic storms of 2017 as well as the procurement processes and expenditure of COVID-19 funds by the respective facilities.

It is no secret that the recovery of our major healthcare facilities has been a slow and arduous process; one that continues even now almost 3.5 years after the storms. As a member of the Government Hospitals and Health Facilities Corporation, and specifically as the Treasurer of the Board, I can state that we have remained steadfast in our mission to strengthen their physical infrastructure, rebuild systems to deliver better services, and enhance preparedness for future storms. However, as there are others more qualified than I to speak to the rebuilding process testifying today, I will limit my testimony to addressing only the CARES Act funds that are being managed by OMB relative to the funding given to both the Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center (JFLH) and the Schneider Regional Medical Center (SRMC).

As you know, through the Coronavirus Relief Fund, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, also known as (CARES), Act provides for payments to States and eligible units of local government, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories navigating the impact of
the COVID-19 outbreak. While the Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR) is tasked with the oversight-related responsibility of all of the disaster recovery funds that come into the territory, OMB currently manages the Treasury CARES Act Relief Fund (CRF), the Education Stabilization Fund (ESF Governor’s Fund), and the Department of the Interior - Office of Insular Affairs Technical Assistance Program (DOI|OIA TAP) grants.

As of February 2, 2021, JFL Hospital has received a total of $6,163,897.06 from the Treasury CARES Act Relief Fund. $6,000,000 for payroll reimbursement, $60,875 for the purchase of non-contact COVID-19 temperature assessment devices, inclusive of hardware and software, and $103,022.06 for local match reimbursement on project worksheets submitted to FEMA.

As of February 2, 2021, SRMC has received a total of $3,266,711.58 from the Treasury CARES Act Relief Fund; all for payroll reimbursement.

Combined, the hospitals have received a total of $9,430,608.64 or roughly 13% of the monies received from the Treasury CRF to augment their operational costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Madam Chair, this concludes my testimony and I remain available to answer any questions that you may have.