

Gerard Abate Discusses Health Care Disparities In the Virgin Islands

PALM COAST, FL, USA, July 15, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Health disparities are common in the United States. They have been reported for decades. These disparities are the result of inequities that are based on systematic racism and discrimination. The U.S. Virgin Islands has a majority-minority population, but disparities still run rampant, [according to Gerard Abate](#).

Gerard Abate

[Gerard Abate is a cardiologist](#) with over 30 years of experience. During the first half of his career, he specialized in noninvasive clinical cardiology. He then began working for pharmaceutical companies, and successfully launched four drugs.

He now uses his expertise as an advisor and consultant for the industry. Gerard Abate feels this is the best way to use his experience to improve the lives of others.

The U.S. Virgin Islands

The three main islands are St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix. St. Croix and St. John are the most populated islands, with approximately 50,000 residents each. 76% of residents are Afro-American or Afro-Caribbean. 15% of the population is Caucasian, and 17% are Hispanic. The Virgin Islands are a U.S. territory, which differs from a state.

What are Health Disparities?

The CDC defines health disparities as "preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations

According to Gerard Abate, these disparities exist due to several factors. These include differences in insurance coverage, access to care, and quality of care.

Other factors play a role as well. Some groups are also less trusting of the healthcare system, which makes them less likely to get needed care. Genetics place certain ethnic groups at higher risk of some diseases. Unfortunately, these groups also tend to have less access to quality care, which could mitigate some of the risk.

Some research suggests that economic, social, and health behaviors are the greatest determining health factors. Individuals are influenced by culture, social pressures, and economic factors. All of these affect the person's health behaviors.

Barriers to Quality Care

There's been little research into health disparities in the Virgin Islands. One study surveyed residents, and found barriers to care that differ from barriers in the mainland.

There's a small population on the three islands. Similar to rural areas, this can limit access to care. Long wait times were a common complaint, and many respondents said they had to go to the mainland for some types of care. Out of date or they also cited poorly maintained equipment.

The Virgin Islands is a U.S. territory, which limits government-provided resources as well. The Medicare gap, Medicare caps, high cost of healthcare, and large numbers of uninsured residents were big issues for respondents.

Trust and confidentiality were big concerns as well. Because the populations are so small, most people on the islands know each other. Healthcare privacy is protected by law, but residents worry about breaches of privacy protocols.

[Gerard Abate notes](#) that they mentioned cultural competency as well. There's a strong tradition of spirituality and alternative medicine in the islands. Those trained on the mainland often have little cultural knowledge of the people they are treating.

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