



March 17, 1992

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CALL (809) 772-7418

REDFIELD SETS HEARING DATES FOR DRUG PRICING INQUIRY

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REPUBLICAN SENATOR HOLLAND L. REDFIELD II TODAY ANNOUNCED THAT THE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION WILL MEET AT 10 A.M. FRIDAY IN ST. THOMAS, AND ON THE FOLLOWING FRIDAY, MARCH 27 IN ST. CROIX TO INVESTIGATE THE ISSUE OF DRUG PRICING IN THE TERRITORY.

REDFIELD SAID THE COMMITTEE, OF WHICH HE IS CHAIRMAN, HAS BEEN GATHERING DATA FOR THE PAST THREE MONTHS ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES IN THE V.I. AND ELSEWHERE, AND IS PREPARED TO REVEAL ITS FINDINGS AND TAKE FURTHER TESTIMONY FROM THE TERRITORY'S PHARMACISTS.

A BATTERY OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS HAVE COORDINATED THEIR EFFORTS IN PRESENTING AN OVERVIEW OF OVER-THE-COUNTER AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING IN THE TERRITORY. DR. ALFRED HEATH, HEALTH COMMISSIONER WILL PRESENT HIS POSITION ON HOW DRUG PRICING EFFECTS HIS DEPARTMENT, AND HOW DRUG AFFORDABILITY AFFECTS THE DOCTOR-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP.

CLEMENT "CAIN" MAGRAS, COMMISSIONER OF LICENSING AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS, WILL PRESENT HIS DEPARTMENT'S POSITION ON DRUG PRICING, EXISTING REGULATIONS ON DRUG PRICING AND ITEM-BY-ITEM COMPARISONS OF DRUGS AND PHARMACEUTICALS FROM DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE U.S.

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OTHER TESTIFIERS WILL INCLUDE EDWARD THOMAS, DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE BUREAU, TO PRESENT AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROFITABILITY OF DRUG STORES IN THE TERRITORY, AND EARL HAYNES, R.P.H., CHAIRMAN OF THE V.I. BOARD OF PHARMACY, ON THE BOARD'S RELATIONSHIP TO AND OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITY OF PHARMACISTS.

PHARMACISTS FROM EACH ISLAND HAVE BEEN REQUESTED TO ATTEND THE HEARINGS, AND TESTIFY IN PANEL FORMAT TO THE COMMITTEE INQUIRY.

REDFIELD EMPHASIZED THAT "THE PURPOSE OF THE HEARING IS TO DETERMINE IF THE PEOPLE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS ARE BEING TREATED FAIRLY IN AREA OF DRUG PRICING." INFORMATION TAKEN AT THE HEARING WILL DETERMINE IF RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE MADE TO DECREASE OVER-THE-COUNTER AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS BY ENCOURAGING KEENER COMPETITION OR LESSENING GOVERNMENTAL COSTS TO PHARMACIES, AND PASSING ON THE SAVINGS TO THE BELEAGUERED CONSUMER, THE SENATOR SAID.

REDFIELD SAID TESTIMONY TAKEN AT THE HEARINGS WILL PLAY A PART IN DEVELOPING PUBLIC POLICY WHICH EFFECTS DRUG PRICES IN THE TERRITORY. THE SENATOR STRESSED THAT THE HEARING WILL BE NON-CONFRONTATIONAL, AND SEEKS ONLY TO EXTRACT INFORMATION TO BENEFIT ALL CONSUMERS.

THE SENATOR ENCOURAGES MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WISH TO TESTIFY TO ATTEND THE HEARINGS. TO SIGN UP, CONTACT THE SENATOR'S OFFICE AT 772-7418.