

Our Relief Efforts

Within hours of the devastating March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami – the worst natural disaster ever to strike Japan – AmeriCares emergency response experts were en route to the impact zone.

Over the next two months, AmeriCares delivered multiple shipments of critically needed relief supplies, including an emergency airlift of more than \$525,000 worth of medical aid to hospitals, shelters and mobile medical teams caring for survivors. Among those receiving our immediate help were thousands of survivors living in schools and community centers serving as evacuation centers.



Photo by Ramona Bejama/AmeriCares

AmeriCares is helping survivors rebuild their communities and their lives.

AmeriCares Japan relief priorities:

- Restoring and expanding health care services;
- Supporting mental health and counseling services; and
- Assisting evacuee resettlement.



As the displaced began moving into temporary homes in early summer, our focus shifted to rebuilding health services and supporting mental health and counseling. AmeriCares recently opened an office in Sendai – the largest city in the impact zone – to oversee the distribution of \$8 million in aid. We are committed to Japan’s long-term recovery and anticipate working there for up to three years, helping survivors rebuild their communities and their lives.

Building Dental Clinics for Survivors

Tsunami waves 50 feet high decimated the coastal town of Minamisanriku, sweeping homes and buildings out to sea. More than half the population and 95 percent of the town’s infrastructure were washed away in an instant.

One way AmeriCares is helping the 10,000 survivors is by investing \$400,000 to build two dental clinics. Our Japan team worked with town officials to select the locations and sought input from local dentists to help design the facilities. Each clinic will have room for up to three

dental chairs, X-ray machines and a waiting area.

With all six dental clinics in the town destroyed, the only dental care available for the past six months has been offered by a handful of dentists working out of substandard facilities. At the same time, dentists in the region are noticing a spike in dental problems attributed to poor dental hygiene.

“Right now, in the Utatsu neighborhood, a dentist is operating out of a makeshift office on the side of the road with limited running water,” said

AmeriCares VP of Emergency Response Ella Gudwin. “The new clinics will greatly improve the health and hygiene of survivors, and allow local dentists to once again offer comprehensive care.”

When the clinics open this fall, patients will be able to receive treatment for painful toothaches, cavities and denture problems. The AmeriCares clinics are expected to be in use for at least two years, perhaps as long as 10 years, depending on the pace of the reconstruction and the shape of its future medical system.

AmeriCares Earthquake Response Timeline

MARCH 11:

AmeriCares launches a large-scale disaster relief effort after a record 9.0-magnitude earthquake strikes north-eastern Japan, unleashing a deadly tsunami that causes catastrophic destruction and overwhelming loss of life.

MARCH 13:

AmeriCares arrives on the ground in Tokyo and our team begins assessing health needs of survivors.



Photo by Atsushi Shibuya, Primary Care for All Team, Japan Primary Care Association

MARCH 27:

First deliveries of hundreds of cases of hygiene items and bottled water are made to evacuation centers.

APRIL 4:

AmeriCares first emergency airlift containing more than \$525,000 of medical aid arrives in Sendai.

APRIL 19:

AmeriCares begins funding teams clearing sludge and debris from survivors' homes.

APRIL 25:

Training sessions funded by AmeriCares begin to teach relief workers and caregivers how to recognize the signs of distress and depression in survivors.

JUNE 1:

Volunteers begin serving 9,200 hot meals funded by AmeriCares to survivors left homeless.

JUNE 14:

AmeriCares commits to long-term reconstruction and recovery plans. AmeriCares program managers Ramona Bajema and Kyoko Sakurai begin working in Sendai.



Photo by Ramona Bajema/AmeriCares

AUGUST 3:

AmeriCares begins funding mobile medical teams providing care for homeless pregnant women, new mothers and newborns living in shelters.

AUGUST 25:

The AmeriCares Japan office opens in Sendai, providing a base of operations for our relief efforts.

SEPTEMBER 5:

Workers are scheduled to break ground on the first of two dental clinics AmeriCares is building for survivors in Minamisanriku.



AmeriCares

AmeriCares is a nonprofit global health and disaster relief organization which delivers medicines, medical supplies and aid to people in crisis around the world and across the United States.

Photo by Tammy Allen/AmeriCares