To Stop Ebola, Support Health Workers

“To be honest, staff were petrified in July,” says the director of JFK Hospital in Monrovia, Liberia.

But with support from AmeriCares, says Dr. Wvannie Scott-McDonald, “the staff are protected. They know symptoms of Ebola, have aprons for protection and know how to call a doctor when needed.”

By November, the outbreak had infected 13,000 and killed 4,800 people, including more than 300 health workers.

To save lives and contain the Ebola outbreak, AmeriCares is continuing our comprehensive response to the crisis, providing safety supplies, medicines and support for frontline health workers battling Ebola in West Africa.

Seven months into the crisis, AmeriCares had delivered more than 3 million relief supplies, including 14 shipments of safety gear such as full-body protective suits to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the three hardest-hit countries.

Working in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), AmeriCares is providing everything necessary to keep health workers safe at three Ebola treatment units in Liberia — including thousands of gloves, goggles, suits and masks.

AmeriCares is also helping restart and strengthen local hospitals and clinics overwhelmed by the epidemic so they can treat patients struggling with other health conditions, such as malaria, typhoid and complications from childbirth. We are also supporting local health education programs, including providing 500 hand washing stations in Liberia.

“The Ebola crisis highlights the need to support frontline health workers all over the world,” says AmeriCares Vice President of Emergency Response Garrett Ingoglia. “We will help contain this Ebola outbreak, restore basic health services and prepare health workers for future epidemics.”

Video: Meet a Filipino doctor and hear her story of survival: americares.org/typhoondoctor

Your Donations Help a Country Recover

One year after Typhoon Haiyan killed more than 6,000 people in the Philippines and left millions homeless, AmeriCares has restored access to health care for close to 2 million people. Working alongside local partners, AmeriCares is supporting the repair of 74 health clinics damaged or destroyed by the storm, with plans to repair dozens more. Our relief also includes medicine, enough for 1 million prescriptions, to help people injured in the storm or suffering from chronic diseases. In all, AmeriCares has provided $21 million in humanitarian aid.

Now, we are preparing communities for the next typhoon with training for community leaders and health officials. AmeriCares is also ensuring that 2 million Filipinos have access to mental health care by teaching more than 2,300 community health workers to recognize signs of mental illness.

“Before, we were afraid because a patient might be violent,” says Filipino nurse Evelyn Cabanero, who underwent training. “Now we are not afraid. We talk to them, make eye contact and build rapport.”

A burial team removes the body of a suspected Ebola victim in Liberia to prevent spread of the virus (top). To better understand the needs in Ebola treatment units, an AmeriCares staff member undergoes safety training in Liberia (above). AmeriCares has been working to restore and expand health services in the Philippines, allowing Dr. Jen Mateo to help her neighbors (right).
In August, I traveled to Liberia as a missionary serving with SIM USA at the ELWA Hospital in Monrovia. Because of the Ebola crisis, nearly all hospitals were closed — some were decontaminating, others were short of staff due to Ebola infection and a lack of supplies and personal protective gear. At ELWA, only the maternity ward was open. I brought close to $10,000 worth of medicines from AmeriCares Medical Outreach and worked alongside ELWA’s medical director, Dr. Jerry Brown, and other members of the medical staff to perform 35 surgeries until I became infected with Ebola. Three days after testing positive, I was airlifted to a medical center in Nebraska where I recovered.

During my three-week stay, I saw firsthand the desperate need for health services in Liberia. One family brought their 13-year-old daughter to ELWA after being turned away from other hospitals. After caring for Ebola patients all day at another facility, Dr. Brown examined the young patient at 8 p.m. and recommended immediate abdominal surgery; we began at 10 p.m. and operated until midnight, closing intestinal perforations caused by Typhoid fever. I spent the night monitoring the girl as she was quite ill from fever.

I am happy to report that the young girl is slowly recovering. But she is just one of so many people in Liberia who are at risk because of the Ebola tsunami that swept through an already fragile health care system. I have recovered from my Ebola infection and am eager to return to Liberia and help where the need is so great.

Note: Since Dr. Sacra’s visit, AmeriCares has provided ELWA Hospital with support to re-open its emergency ward.

From the President and CEO

Dear Friends,

When I speak with our staff in Liberia, I hear stories of health workers and patients struggling against the deadly tide of Ebola in West Africa. The numbers of infected and dead are disheartening, but from our staff and other reports I know that lives can — and are — being saved.

AmeriCares continues our robust response, sending crucial safety gear that protects health workers (page 1) while we begin plans to help restart and strengthen West Africa’s fragile, damaged health systems. We could not do this work without your support. I am uplifted by the response of our donors to this crisis.

Together, we are working toward a time in West Africa when one infected patient does not result in a regional outbreak.

I am confident of this because with your ongoing support AmeriCares has helped create lasting change after other disasters: In Haiti, where we gave community health workers the resources to battle cholera; in Peru, where we provided medicines and health education to stop the legacy of diabetes in a rural town; and in the Philippines, where we have rebuilt and improved clinics after last year’s typhoon (page 1).

We know how to create sustainable health improvements in neglected, vulnerable communities and with your help, AmeriCares will do more in the coming year.

Michael J. Nyenhuis, President and CEO

Voices from the Field: Surgery in the Ebola Zone  By Dr. Richard Sacra

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Alain received free surgery through an AmeriCares program (top). Dr. Richard Sacra used donated medicines from AmeriCares on a medical mission to Liberia (above) before he became ill from Ebola.
Donations Strengthen Emergency Response

Support from a group of committed Annual Emergency Response Partners helps AmeriCares maintain readiness, including an emergency pharmacy and the ability to quickly deploy health workers and aid shipments to disaster sites.

This strong base of support allows AmeriCares emergency staff to conduct assessments in vulnerable countries where disasters occur frequently — helping to prepare for deadly seasonal storms, for example. With ongoing commitments from these partners, we can pre-position medical and relief supplies in those countries and monitor disease outbreaks, including cholera and Ebola. We also maintain emergency health kits at distribution hubs, for immediate deployment anywhere on the globe.

In the past two years, corporations participating in AmeriCares Annual Emergency Response Partner program have doubled. For partners, this is a unique way to ensure that they are among the first to help save lives whenever disaster strikes. “We know that when a disaster occurs the ability to act quickly and respond to the needs of communities is vital, we are pleased to be able to support AmeriCares so they may act quickly during emergencies,” says Lance Chrisman, executive director of the Anthem Foundation. “Disaster relief is important to our customers and associates and the communities we serve.”

Boeing and its employees value the social responsibility this support represents. “Boeing is committed to giving back,” says Liz Warman, Director of Global Corporate Citizenship, Northwest Region at Boeing Commercial Airplanes. “Corporate citizenship speaks to everything we do — from our products and services to our business practices and community engagement. We feel privileged to be able to help those in need.”

Current Annual Emergency Response Partners are Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Anthem Foundation, Boeing, Covidien, McGraw Hill Financial, MedImmune, OdysseyRe Foundation, Southwest Airlines, Voya Foundation and a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

Safe Water Restored After Tornado

When a tornado ripped through tiny Gifford, Illinois, in November 2013, it left the town in tatters. Insurance covered people’s homes, but residents were shocked to learn that the town’s insurance did not completely cover damage to infrastructure, including the village water tower, the source of water for one-third of residents and fire response. With an inadequate supply, water quality could not be ensured and neighboring squads had to cover the town’s fire station.

With project support from AmeriCares, the town repaired the tower and restored an adequate flow of safe water to homes and the fire department. The response to the tornadoes is just one of 29 emergencies AmeriCares responded to last year, delivering emergency preparedness, response and recovery projects valued at $38 million.

With our partners’ commitments, AmeriCares is always ready for disasters (top). This tornado-damaged water tower made water unsafe for residents until AmeriCares repaired it (above). Donor Al Hartig appreciates AmeriCares efficiency (top right).
Your Donations at Work in 67 Countries

With your help, between July 1 and September 30, 2014, AmeriCares sent medicines, medical supplies and project support to the following countries:

Afghanistan  Armenia  Bangladesh  Belize  Bolivia  Cambodia  Cameroon  China  Colombia  Congo (Kinshasa)  Dominican Republic  Ecuador  El Salvador  Ethiopia  Fiji  Ghana  Grenada  Guatemala  Guyana  Haiti  Honduras  India  Indonesia  Iraq  Ivory Coast  Jamaica  Japan  Jordan  Kenya  Laos  Lebanon  Liberia  Malawi  Marshall Islands  Mexico  Morocco  Mozambique  Nepal  Nicaragua  Niger  Nigeria  North Korea  Pakistan  Palestinian Territories  Panama  Peru  Philippines  Poland  Romania  Rwanda  Senegal  Sierra Leone  Solomon Islands  South Africa  St. Vincent  Swaziland  Tanzania  Thailand  Trinidad  Uganda  Ukraine  United States  Uzbekistan  Venezuela  Vietnam

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Ten years after the Southeast Asia tsunami devastated Sri Lanka and Indonesia, this little girl can get the monthly transfusion she needs at a hospital ward AmeriCares built to restore and strengthen health systems.

Ebola Emergency

Ebola Emergency: Since May, AmeriCares has sent 14 shipments of safety equipment, supplies and medicine to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Here, our staff meets a delivery at the airport in Monrovia, Liberia.

Philippines

Philippines: The doctor is in – now that AmeriCares has restored health care to devastated regions of the Philippines one year after super Typhoon Haiyan swept the region.

Tanzania

Tanzania: These young women are recovering after surgery to repair obstetric fistula at Bugando Medical Centre in Mwanza. Now they can resume their lives, healthy and confident.

Thank you to CAROLEE for supporting AmeriCares during the 2014 holiday season with a specially designed jewelry collection.

AmeriCares

AmeriCares is an emergency response and global health organization committed to saving lives and building healthier futures for people in crisis in the United States and around the world.

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