Aid Reaches Hurricane Survivors in the U.S.

United States

Americares has been working with federal, state and local organizations to quickly and effectively deliver medical aid to hurricane survivors in Florida, Puerto Rico, Texas and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Powerful storms have left millions struggling for the basics they need to live. Cut off from water and electricity, survivors are finding that many health centers and hospitals are damaged or closed.

The Americares team arrived in Puerto Rico just days after Hurricane Maria made landfall with destructive winds that killed more than 20 people and left 3.4 million people without power. Americares delivered 20 tons of medical aid in the first month, collaborating with the Puerto Rico Department of Health and community clinics to meet the most pressing needs. “Every day, our team is seeing hospitals and clinics with critical shortages of essential medicines,” says Americares Director of Emergency Response Kate Dischino. “We are working to ensure doctors and nurses have the supplies they need to continue caring for survivors.”

In all of these battered regions, Americares is focused on addressing the urgent medical needs of affected residents, helping meet the health needs of people displaced by disaster and working to restore primary care services, particularly to vulnerable populations.

Americares emergency responders were in Texas and Florida before hurricanes Harvey and Irma made landfall. “Americares really had the foresight,” says Dr. Adlia Ebeid, director of pharmacy services at San Jose Clinic in Houston; the clinic is using Americares medicine to treat survivors. “Without Americares, we would have had to turn people away.”

Before Hurricane Irma struck Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Americares offered assistance to our more than 80 health partners in the storm’s path, prepositioned medicine and began emergency shipments within days of the storm’s landfall. The emergency response team met with local health facilities in Florida, where our deliveries of aid to Key West enabled community clinics, including a nursing home, to be ready for residents returning to the area.

Americares airlifted medicine and relief supplies to Florida, Puerto Rico, Texas and the U.S. Virgin Islands, responding to specific requests from local health centers (above). When dialysis patients like Melvin (right) were unable to reach dialysis centers because of flooding in Texas, Americares provided emergency transportation. See a video of Melvin here.
When heavy rains and a landslide sent a huge rock into the back of her house in Sri Lanka, Udayangani grabbed her 9-year-old daughter and shouted to her husband and mother to run. The family fled to a shelter, which was supported by Americares with hygiene kits, including toothbrushes and other necessities the family had left behind in their flight.

Constant, heavy rains threatened more landslides, so Udayangani, who was 5-months pregnant, and her family stayed at the shelter for weeks, along with hundreds of other families. Americares not only supplied the shelter with personal care kits, but also trained local health workers to meet the mental health needs of communities displaced and under threat. Two pediatric hospitals in the region were damaged by the floods and Americares is ensuring both facilities are rebuilt to withstand future disasters. Building back better is a proven investment: Nearby Elpitiya Hospital, which Americares rebuilt 10 years ago after the 2004 Southeast Asia tsunami, remained open to treat patients during the floods in Sri Lanka this year.

Famine, conflict and a refugee crisis have contributed to an unprecedented outbreak of deadly cholera in East Africa and Yemen. Americares is working with local and international partners to deliver lifesaving medicine, nutritional and medical supplies to treat the infectious disease.

“This is the largest single-year cholera outbreak the world has ever seen," says Americares Medical Officer Dr. Julie Varughese. Since April 2017, more than 700,000 people have been infected and 2,000 have died. The disease is spread through contaminated water. Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East. An estimated 2 million people are displaced within its borders, and there is a severe shortage of doctors and health centers; clean water and sanitation are also scarce. “Americares shipments give health workers what they need to save lives and stop the spread of disease," says Varughese.
When it came time for Carol Baker to sell appreciated stock, she knew the most tax-smart move to make: “I didn’t want to pay capital gains,” Carol says. “So I used the stock to fund a gift annuity with Americares, and this way I have more to give.”

A thrifty retiree who volunteers in her Texas community, Carol was initially attracted to Americares because of its global health work and ability to “get more bang for each buck,” she says. The fact that Americares is first on the scene after disasters is important, as is Americares collaborative work to create sustainable improvements at the local level. “I believe in teaching people to fish rather than feeding them,” Carol says.

Carol knows better than most that charitable gift annuities are smart: A retired Bureau of Indian Affairs administrator, she volunteers each year as a tax preparer for AARP members. Carol also named Americares a beneficiary of her IRA and uses the taxable assets to fuel her annual giving to Americares.

A passionate traveler, Carol volunteers internationally, recently taking part in a census of wildlife in Malawi. Giving time and treasure has real value for Carol. “The more we give, the more we get,” she says.

To learn more about gift planning, contact Karen Malner at Americares 203.658.9596 or kmalner@americares.org

Over the past 15 years, Endo’s branded and generic divisions have supported Americares by donating quality medicines for distribution to 83 countries. This past summer, Americares, in partnership with the Healthcare Distribution Alliance (HDA), presented its annual Power of Partnership Award to Endo Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Par Pharmaceutical, operating companies of Endo International plc, in recognition of their outstanding commitment to increasing access to health care around the world.

“Endo is committed to delivering quality medicines to patients in need and we are proud to support the important work of Americares,” says Paul Campanelli, President and CEO of Endo. “We are honored to receive this recognition from Americares as we share the goal of expanding access to health care.”

Endo’s donations also supply volunteer medical teams providing care to patients in desperate need and support safety net health clinics in the United States caring for uninsured and underinsured patients.

Plan a Gift, Leave a Legacy

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Dominica: Americas staff delivered medicine to Dominica by helicopter after Hurricane Maria damaged the airport. The team then delivered an emergency airlift of requested aid just as the airport opened. See a video here.

Ecuador: This baby and mother have easy access to full health services at the emergency hospital Americas brought to their hometown of Pedemales, Ecuador. A destructive earthquake last year damaged the town’s small clinic.

Liberia: Americas program to improve the health of mothers and newborns in Liberia, includes nurse midwives, prenatal care and this room at Zondo clinic, where mothers and infants can rest.

United States: For the nation’s low-income uninsured, Americas builds the capacity of more than 1,000 safety net clinics and health centers. Abel uses information from his local clinic to adopt a healthier lifestyle, reducing his need for medication.

Emergency Response Partners
These organizations support Americas year-round readiness for global emergencies, including the current emergencies shown in red, above.

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- Chevron
- Fiat Chrysler Automobiles Foundation
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- Medtronic
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- Northrup Grumman
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- Patagonia
- Southwest Airlines
- Vanech Family Foundation
- Voya Financial
- Anonymous

United States

Americas is a health-focused relief and development organization that responds to people affected by poverty or disaster with life-changing health programs, medicine and medical supplies.

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