

Hurricane Maria Two-Year Report



THE STORM

Hurricane Maria made landfall as a Category 4 storm in Puerto Rico, causing an estimated \$94 billion in damages; some studies attribute nearly 3,000 deaths to the hurricane and its aftermath. Many survivors lived for months without power or safe water and little or no access to health services. Hurricane Maria also devastated Dominica and caused considerable damage in other Caribbean islands, including the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Today, Americares continues to support hurricane survivors in Dominica and Puerto Rico. As well as restoring health services and training health workers in preparedness and mental health and psychosocial services, we are partnering with health facilities and communities and, in Puerto Rico, addressing chronic disease.

Puerto Rico

Americares Hurricane Maria recovery program in Puerto Rico is building the capacity of health workers and strengthening health facilities to meet the changing needs of patients and communities. Our work focuses on disaster preparedness, mental health and psychosocial services and decentralization of health services to reach the most excluded.

Prepared for future disasters: Americares has trained more than 1,200 health workers and staff across Puerto Rico in disaster preparedness. Health care providers from public health facilities, Federally Qualified Health Centers, social service agencies and more have taken part.

Americares trainings provide a practical approach to preparedness. We work with participants to build capability in resilience and resource management—and to develop communication and coordination skills to maintain health services and save lives during and after disasters.



In Puerto Rico, Americares has trained health workers, emergency responders and social service providers to better cope with stress and trauma.

Americares
Health
Programs
Continue

Mental health and psychosocial:

To increase access to mental health services and address the psychosocial needs of Puerto Rico's health workforce, Americares provided training for more than 7,200 health care workers, social service providers and first responders in the two years after Hurricane Maria struck the island. Health care workers, social service providers and first responders received training in Psychological First Aid and Resilience and Coping for the Healthcare Community.

Americares Psychological First Aid and Resilience and Coping for the Health Care Community workshops addressed post-disaster symptoms common among health care workers, including job burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress and vicarious traumatization. Trainees can now better address health care needs among patients, including the elderly, who can be especially vulnerable.

8,400+

health workers trained

11

health centers rebuilt

290,000

prescriptions delivered

\$40 million

in medicine and supplies



In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, Americares has rebuilt 11 primary health centers throughout Dominica.



In Puerto Rico, AmeriCares installed solar energy systems to ensure health centers can function if future storms cut power.

“Hurricane Maria’s destruction was unprecedented. Impacted communities are on their way to recovery, but more work remains. Thousands of survivors are still reeling from the psychological and economic impact of the storm.”

— Kate Dischino,
AmeriCares Vice President of
Emergency Programs

Dominica Aid

Rebuilding health centers: Two years after Hurricane Maria, AmeriCares has rebuilt 11 primary health facilities serving a population of 65,000 people—and provided key building upgrades to Dominica’s Central Medical Stores. Now, we’re exploring ways to support Central Medical Stores even further—including installing solar panels; energy-efficient lighting, timers and switches; and temperature monitoring for medicine cold storage.

Growing the supply chain: AmeriCares is also helping the Ministry of Health organize and inventory donated medicine and medical supplies. Two years after the storm, AmeriCares has installed warehousing equipment and redesigned Central Medical Stores’ floorplans to ensure medicine moves in and out swiftly and accurate records are kept. AmeriCares plans to continue working alongside the Ministry of Health to strengthen the country’s medical supply chain.



Immediate Response

In the weeks after Hurricane Maria destroyed much of Puerto Rico, AmeriCares assessment teams visited hospitals and clinics across the island, including the islands of Vieques and Culebra. AmeriCares emergency medical teams provided 1,700 patient consultations during two months in the field, including more than 200 house calls for patients unable to travel to health facilities and 260 mental health consults. AmeriCares also made deliveries of critical medicine and relief items to 47 partners, including 18 hospitals and clinics. AmeriCares provided a temporary structure to allow an inoperable health facility to continue its services and supported transportation for dialysis patients from Vieques.

Just days after Hurricane Maria struck Dominica, AmeriCares staff arrived with medicine and supplies for the island’s damaged hospital. More shipments of supplies quickly followed. AmeriCares encountered widespread damage to health infrastructure in several Dominica parishes.



AmeriCares has trained more than 8,400 health workers.