

HEALTH CLUSTER BULLETIN

CHOLERA OUTBREAK IN HAITI – FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2010 – #3

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Forty tons of essential medicines and health promotion materials were distributed throughout the country today in a partnership among the Ministry Health (MSPP), the Health Cluster, and the Logistics Cluster. This was the first of a three-day operation based on the government strategy to send essential medicines and supplies to areas hardest hit by cholera, as well as to preposition supplies in remote locations. Shipments left PROMESS, the PAHO/WHO medical warehouse, using five WFP.

Four helicopter missions headed to Port de Paix and Fort Liberte with essential medicines such IV fluids, ORS, and antibiotics, health promotion posters, and technical guidelines.

The social unrest continues to limit access to health facilities in certain areas and may result in significant mortality. Cholera response operations in the North Department were hampered by civil unrest in Cap Haïtien. No shipments of medical supplies have been received since last weekend, and planned distribution for the week of November 15 was postponed because of blocked roads. Health Cluster partners remain in Cap Haïtien and are working to coordinate operations under challenging circumstances. Several initiatives are on hold, including support to cholera treatment centers (CTC), training of health personnel, and delivering supplies to affected communities.



In a Cite Soleil camp for displaced people health promoters along with community leaders distribute educational material on cholera prevention.

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Health Cluster partners are asked to contribute to this bulletin with information on needs and activities as well as corrections to content, by emailing haiclsan@paho.org (subject heading: Health Cluster Bulletin). For useful information on meetings, guidelines, and health facility locations, visit: <http://haiti.humanitarianresponse.info>.

Although many partners are operating in Haiti, many areas are not covered for cholera treatment. Insufficient human resources is a major gap in providing treatment to cholera patients. It takes an average staff of 130 people to manage a 100 bed Cholera Treatment Center (CTC). The Health Cluster is working with partners on developing a surge capacity with NGOs, the Federation, the Cuban Brigades and the Brazilian Brigades that would allow for an additional 1000 CTC beds in Port-au-Prince. PAHO/WHO has added additional staff in the areas of logistics, risk assessment, case management, and disease surveillance.

Social mobilization and health promotion efforts need to be scaled-up as people are still scared of cholera. For example, the Red Cross reports that in Marmelade, people suffering from other diseases have refused to visit hospitals because of fear of contracting cholera. This includes pregnant women who are foregoing regular medical check-ups.

Management of dead bodies has been temporarily solved in metropolitan Port-au-Prince, but has created significant challenges in other areas of the country - specifically the North West Department.

As of November 19, 36 CTCs and 61 CTUs were operational throughout the country, while new Oral Rehydration Centers (ORC) are being set up every day in communes. Health partners continue to support the MSPP and the Government of Haiti through implementation of the national cholera response plan. To support health promotion activities, PAHO/WHO has distributed 97,000 posters and 150,000 laminated pages with guidance on cholera prevention and treatment. These resources have been distributed to government agencies and NGOs in affected departments. In metropolitan Port-au-Prince, 11 of the 14 planned CTCs have been constructed. Although their bed capacity is limited, CTUs serve as an important point of entry for triaging cholera cases.

Routine immunization of children against vaccine-preventable diseases took place in many regions of Haiti on November 16, as part of Haiti's Children's Health Week. Cholera education and treatment activities were included as part of these activities.

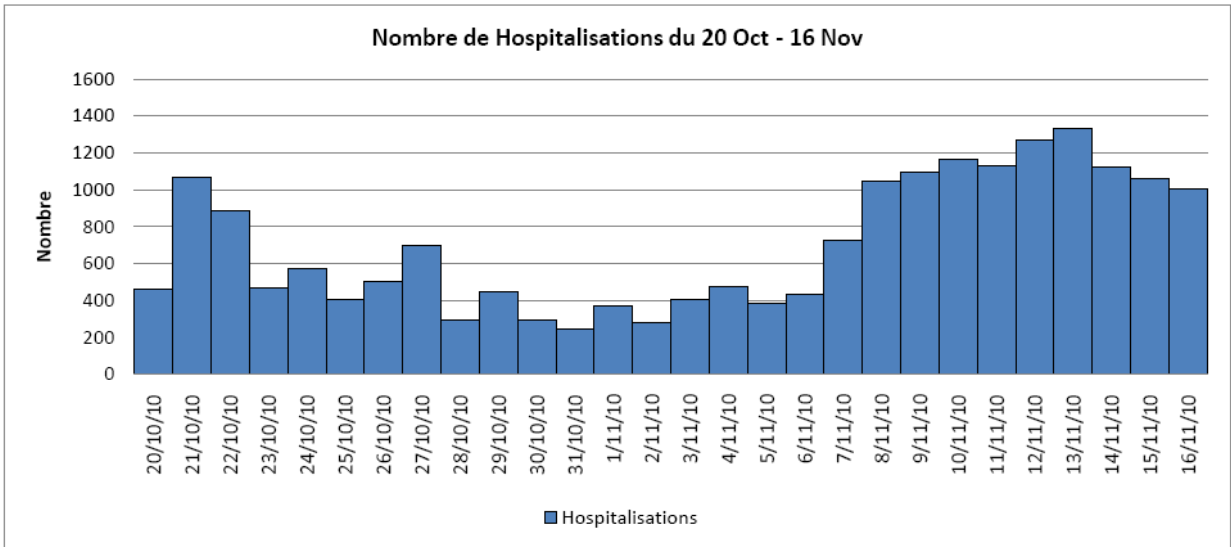
Epidemiology

On November 19, the MSPP published updated epidemiological information. The numbers reflect data sent by the departments to the Directorate of Epidemiology, compiled and analyzed with the support of the CDC, and now include cases reported by NGOs. For the first time, data on outpatients were included in the MSPP report.

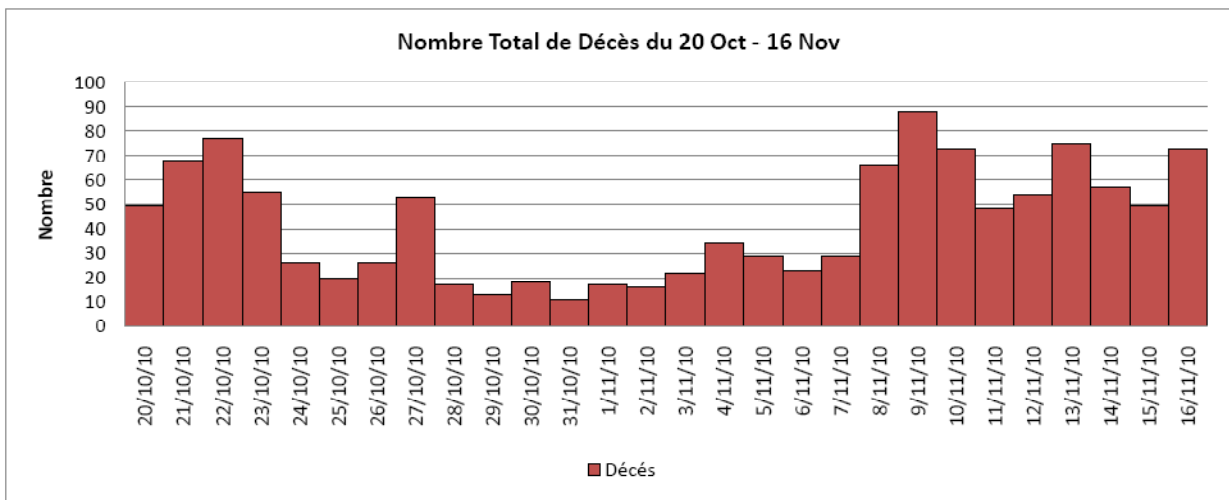
The cumulative number of cholera cases between October 20 and November 16 was 49,418, out of which 40% (19,646) have been hospitalized. According to the report, 774 patients remained hospitalized. The cumulative number of deaths due to cholera was 1,186 (774 at the hospital level and 412 at the community level), which brought the in-hospital case fatality rate to 3.9% and the mortality rate to 14.16 per 100,000 inhabitants.

For Port-au-Prince, the cumulative number of hospital admissions and deaths due to cholera were 1,291 and 61, respectively (54 at the health services level and seven at the community level).

On November 16, the department of Sud Est registered cases for the first time, bringing the total number of departments affected to eight (Sud Est, Artibonite, Central, Ouest, Nord Ouest, Nord Est, Sud and Nord). In Port-au-Prince, the neighborhoods registering cases are Carrefour, Cite Soleil, Delmas, Kenscoff, Petion Ville, Port-au-Prince and Tabarre.



Number of Cholera hospitalizations: October 20 - November 16 (Source: MSPP)



Number of cholera deaths: October 20 - November 16 (Source: MSPP)

Response Activities in the Departments

North West

Reports from the North West indicate that the epidemic is spreading. The most affected areas are Bassin Bleu, Port de Paix, Saint Louis du Nord, though others communes also present new cases.

A significant gap has been identified in the management of dead bodies. In Port de Paix, an agreement was reached with a transportation company. However, in other communes, cadavers are not being buried promptly. In many cases, the International Office for Migration reports that deceased cholera patients remain in the hospitals for more than 14 hours and, in some instances, are returned to their families who do not follow proper decontamination measures. Health partners are in need of body bags and funding for transportation of cadavers.

North East

New cases continue to emerge in the North East Department, including communities such as Ouanaminte (30) and Fort Liberty (3). PAHO/WHO sent four tons of medical supplies with a two person team to support the local MSPP unit. This will help increase stocks and allow for the opening of CTUs in Ouanaminte and Fort Liberte. The border with the Dominican Republic is partially closed, with increased military presence on the Dominican side. Passport holders are allowed to cross the border at this point.

North

In the North, the activities of UN agencies such as PAHO/WHO, WFP, UNICEF and IOM were restricted due to the security situation. Cholera continues to spread among the population. Health partners in Milot, Limbe, Quartier Morin, and Great River North may run out of supplies and have trouble treating the increased number of patients.

As of November 19, the security situation in Cap Haitien appeared to have improved and people were working to clean roads and open businesses. This was also report in Limbe. Health partners are hopeful to restart operational activities in the coming days. In order to avoid a shortage of supplies, PAHO/WHO plans to send 10 tons of medicines and logistics materials this weekend to support the MSPP in the North. The stock will be available in case of future disruptions and closures.

Artibonite

In Saint Marc, the Haitian Red Cross continues its sensitization campaign. On November 16, five schools participated, with activities reaching 1,710 students. A refresher course on sensitization was held for 78 volunteers. Seven volunteers are working in the public market of Saint Marc with megaphones for sensitizing people.

The Red Cross reports that, in Marmelade, people suffering from other diseases have refused to visit hospitals because of fear of contracting cholera. This includes pregnant women who are foregoing regular medical check-ups.

On November 16, the Municipal Council of Gros Morne held a special meeting on cholera. Attendees included the Communal Health Unit, CARE, MINUSTAH (DH, AC), Haitian Red Cross, Scouts of Haiti, the Disabled Association, CASEC, ASEC, HNP, Justice, La Presse Churches, SOS, Civil Defence, the employees of SDC/MPCE. The focus was the need to improve hygiene to limit the spread of the disease.

CARE International continues to support area health centers in order to better care for the growing number of people with cholera, and will remain until medical NGOs can take the lead. Over the past few days, CARE has distributed 172 units of Ringer's Lactate, 60 Intracath and 50 tarps to health centers in Ennery, Gros-Morne, and Marmelade.

West

In Cite Soleil, AVSI and Samaritan's Purse are operating ORC; Samaritan's Purse is also running a CTC in Cite Soleil, with a 100 bed capacity.

Merlin is operating CTUs in Port-au-Prince. Four are fully operational, and two additional units will be operational soon. The units are located in Marche Tibois, Caravelle CdS, Camp Benediction, Turbe CdS, (operational) and Camp Vilan Beta and Camp Canaan 3 (open soon). Merlin/IFRC has received official approval for location of a CTC on the site of Ba'boun Health Centre in Croix-des-Bouquets. Construction has now started on this site for a 60-bed CTC, and options are being explored to extend the site to increase capacity. With local partner GRAICO, Merlin is running ongoing preventive health activities in eight sites in Port-au-Prince.

In Leogane, the IFRC is supporting the DINEPA and other WASH and Health NGOs in preparation for and response to the spread of cholera. IFRC have been involved in the dissemination of information on cholera prevention through 100 hygiene promoters. IFRC have joined the Spanish Red Cross to support the disinfection of latrines at nine schools at the request of UNICEF. Leogane has begun to receive soap, aquatabs and safety equipment to support efforts to supply clean water in Leogane.

Merlin is supporting coordination of a CTC in Petit Goave, through logistical support, supplies, and medical and non-medical human resources. Merlin has trained 43 health promoters on cholera prevention and community education. There have been consistent cholera prevention activities for the past month in the seven rural communities in which Merlin is active. Community leaders and camp committees have also received training and are providing information in their communities on cholera and cholera prevention.

South East

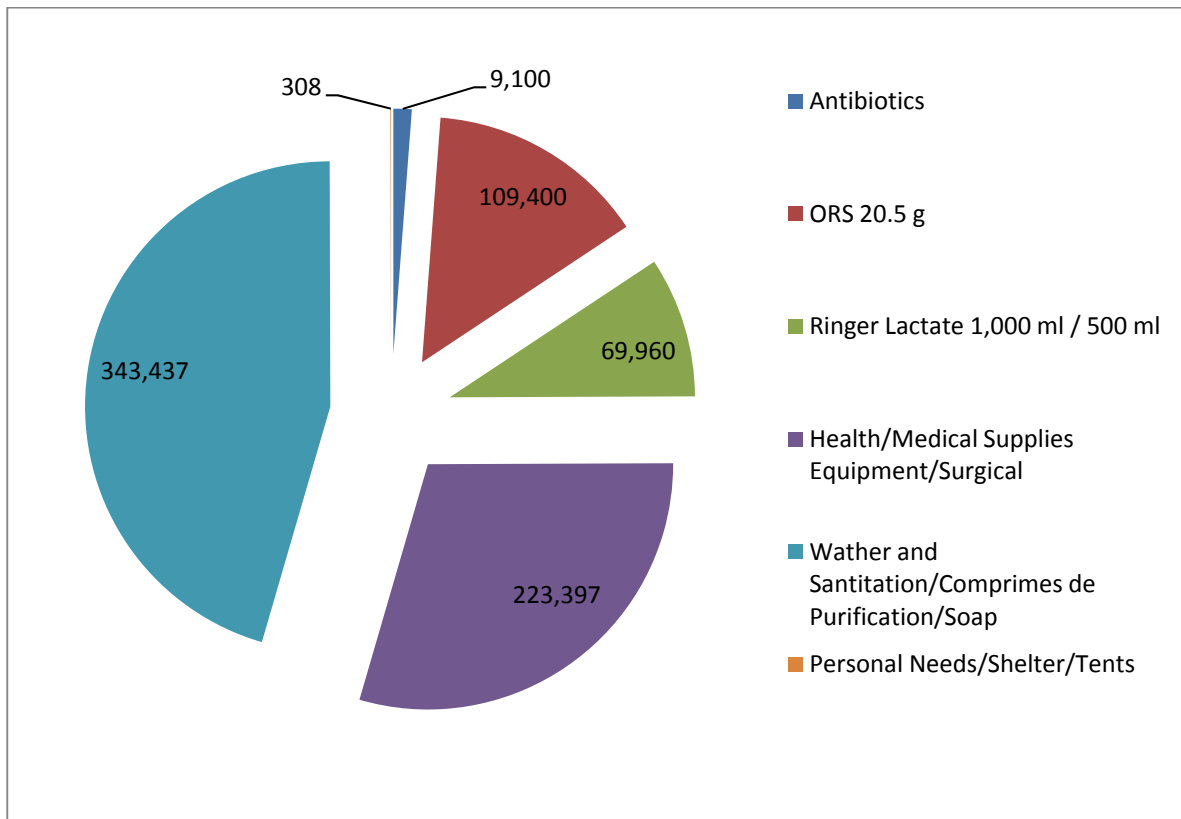
In Jacmel on November 17 and 18, the Community Coalition for Haiti (CCH) held training sessions on cholera treatment and prevention for all medical professionals in the South East, including in rural areas. The training was led by a team from the International Center for Diarrheal Disease of Bangladesh (ICDDR), with support of PAHO/WHO.

South

The Danish and British Red Cross have started planning for Les Cayes cholera awareness-raising campaigns. They will together cover 220 schools in Torbeck, Arniquet, Camp Perrin and Chantal and additional schools (number as yet unknown) in Coteaux and Les Anglais.

SUMA Logistics Support System

The following table summarizes the donations from Governments and Organization carried out to the MSPP and PROMESS, in units, as processed by SUMA:



NGOs are invited to manage their supplies in the country using the SUMA system, which contributes to consolidate the supplies information in their inventories. Implementing SUMA in an NGO is a simple process. Staff can normally be trained in a day, and a special list of key items which are important for

dealing with the cholera outbreak has already been drawn up. This list is uploaded when the software is installed.

The SUMA system is designed to manage humanitarian assistance and has all the stock management functions. Thanks to this system, one can rapidly find out how many units of a particular item are in stock or obtain information about the inventory in general, how much there is, how much has been received, and the distribution, either overall or broken down by beneficiary or department.

The system has different types of summary reports. It also has reports for monitoring a specific donation, as well as feedback reports. The system is very flexible in terms of how the inventory can be organized in a warehouse; one can focus on the general inventory or projects, budget lines, or donors.

The SUMA system is provided free-of-charge to all organizations wishing to use it.

Organizations interested in using SUMA are encouraged to contact Mr. Jeronimo Venegas (SUMA team leader in Haiti, venegasj@paho.org, +509 3419-9509) or Mr. Antonio Zugaldia (PAHO/WHO Emergency Operations Center, zugaldia@paho.org, +1 202 974-3399).

Health Promotion & Training

PAHO/WHO and MSPP staff have distributed cholera-related posters and pamphlets and have trained health workers in cholera diagnosis and prevention at three health centers: Ganthier Center in Bosquet, Hospital Communautaire Christ pour Tous in Fond Parisien and “Love a Child” in Fond Parisien.

The Red Cross has been using its weekly radio program *Radio Croix Rouge Haitienne*, radio spots, and sound trucks to spread cholera prevention messages, while more than 1,000 trained Haitian Red Cross volunteers have been active across the country disseminating this crucial information.

In addition, the Red Cross is pioneering the use of SMS (short message service) in Haiti. At the beginning of the outbreak, the Red Cross sent more than 2 million SMS over four days to people living in Artibonite and Port-au-Prince, sharing simple messages about how people could reduce their chances of becoming sick. In response to this campaign, more than 75,000 people called a free Red Cross information line for more detailed advice on avoiding cholera.

This means that more than 20 percent of people who were reached through the campaign called the information line. This is likely an underestimate, as the capacity of the information line was quickly exceeded.

The successful outreach is the result of a first-of-its-kind text messaging application developed for the Red Cross in partnership with Voilà, a leading wireless provider in Haiti, and its parent company, *Trilogy International Partners*. The Voilà application enables the Red Cross to target customized text messages via

SMS to phone users within specific geographic areas affected by the cholera epidemic. Haiti is the first country in the world to benefit from this innovative technology being deployed by the Red Cross.

As part of its support to MSPP, CDC has organized a training of trainers' course on cholera case management. This session took place on November 15 and 16 at the Parc Historique de la Canne à Sucre. Most of the approximately 30 trainees represented health care providers from MSPP and other partners of PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief). This initiative is intended to contribute to efforts by MSPP and other partners to strengthen capacity for cholera prevention and case management across Haiti. These master trainers supported by CDC will be conducting field training from November 18 to November 25 in PEPFAR and MSPP supported health facilities in 7 departments. The teams will be carrying emergency cholera supplies for the facilities in need. In addition, a second training will be offered for the West Department on November, 22. This training will also be held at la Canne à Sucre in Port-au-Prince. Partners interested in this training should contact Wysler Domercant at domercantj@ht.cdc.gov.

References

- [Health Cluster](#) website.
- [Ministère de la santé publique et de la population](#) (MSPP).
- [Pan American Health Organization](#) (PAHO/WHO).