

Hurricane Sandy
Emergency Operations Center
Situation Report #2

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Hurricane Sandy, after lashing the Caribbean, hit the U.S. on Monday, 29 October, affecting millions along the East Coast. The hurricane resulted in at least 165 deaths throughout the Region.
- Intense flooding, especially in New York and New Jersey, forced people to evacuate, shut down transportation systems and cutoff transport via major roads and bridges. The New York Stock Exchange was closed Monday and Tuesday (29 and 30 October) as well as the Federal Government in Washington, DC.
- Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius has declared a public health emergency for New York.

HEALTH SITUATION

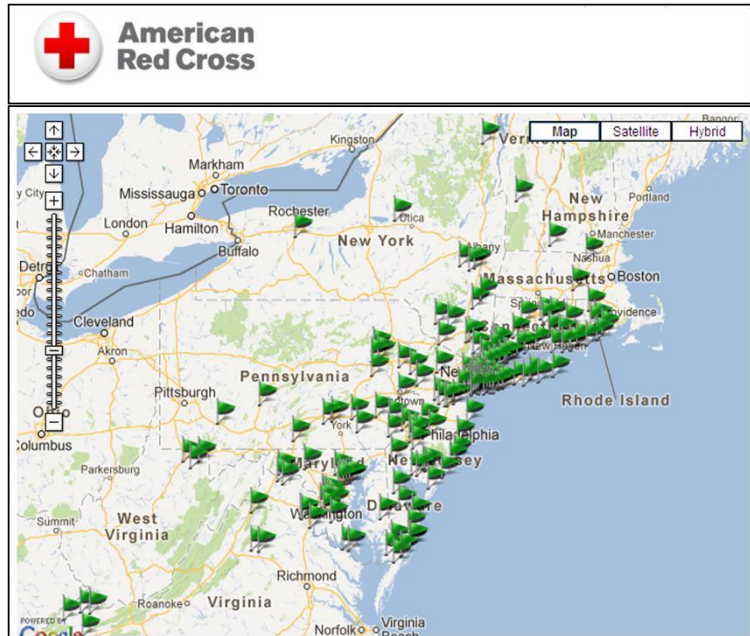
USA

- On Monday, 29 October, Hurricane Sandy came ashore in the U.S. and pounded the East Coast, affecting states from West Virginia to Connecticut. According to reports, at least 90 deaths have occurred as a result of the storm.
- Shortly after the hurricane hit, around 8 million people lost power. In Manhattan alone, at least 530,000 people were left without power.
- Most hospitals in the region remain open and functioning, however some had to be evacuated during the storm. According to the NYC Health and Hospital Corporation, the Bellevue Hospital in downtown New York City was evacuated, and all patients were transferred to alternative facilities. Coney Island Hospital evacuated 180 patients, and flooding and power loss forced the New York University Langone Medical Center to evacuate patients. Many hospitals were able to relocate patients prior to the storm.



Flooding in Haiti from Hurricane Sandy

- A FEMA national ambulance contract has enabled the delivery of 350 ambulances to New York City. According to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), more than 500 HHS personnel have been deployed to provide public health and medical assistance to the states impacted by the hurricane.
- Disaster Medical Assistance Teams coming from throughout the country are providing care in medical shelters in the New York City as of 31 October, and a 50-person Disaster Medical Assistance Team is providing medical care in shelters in New Jersey. Additional teams are available if needed and medical equipment and supplies are ready for deployment if required.



Map of Red Cross Shelters along the East Coast, U.S.

- The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reports that the NYC tap water is safe to drink, including in areas with flooding, unless otherwise reported by city officials. The NYC Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene are monitoring the city’s drinking water system and will provide additional information or warning if needed.
- The Red Cross has provided more than 23,000 overnight shelter stays since Saturday. Tuesday, 30 October, more than 9,000 people stayed in 171 Red Cross shelters across 13 states. The Red Cross has activated nearly 200 emergency response vehicles that are beginning to circulate through some communities distributing meals, water and snacks.

Bahamas

- The majority of the health facilities (hospitals and clinics) are open and providing services as normal.
- The Bahamian Department of Environmental Health is currently assessing the needs of disadvantaged populations, especially in Abaco.
- The Ministry of Health/Department of Public Health and the National Insurance Board are coordinating to begin repairing damage, specifically in health clinics. They are also mobilizing backup, portable generators to those areas most in need (Governor’s Harbor and Fox Hill Clinic in New Providence).
- The PAHO/WHO office is closely monitoring the situation and coordinating with the Ministry of Health, Environmental Health, Public Hospital Authorities and NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency). Currently, there have been no requests for international support.

Cuba

- Hurricane Sandy severely affected the city of Santiago de Cuba. This is the second largest city in the country with a population of around 500,000. Close to 61,000 families (approximately 305,000 people) were affected by the storm, equating to 61% of the population. Assessments are still ongoing throughout the country in the most affected provinces (Santiago de Cuba, Holguín and Guantánamo).
- As of 31 October, reports indicate that 615 health facilities of different levels have been affected in six provinces: Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Granma, Holguin, Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo. The majority of these are in the most affected areas of Santiago de Cuba (239), Holguín (256) and Guantánamo (84). Of the total affected facilities, 34 are hospitals, 122 are pharmacies and 128 are primary care centers.
- According to the Red Cross, around 75% of the city of Santiago is receiving water from reservoirs, but it is not safe and extremely turbid. The Government is providing chlorine tablets but more are required.
- Clean and safe latrines are needed, especially in light of the reported cholera cases earlier in the year. Water-borne diseases are also a major concern and authorities are emphasizing the need of hygiene promotion campaigns. Other major needs include safe water, mosquito nets, hygiene kits and water testing kits.
- According to the UN Emergency Technical Team, over 188,000 dwellings throughout the country have been damaged and assessments are ongoing.
- The damage caused by the hurricane on the environment and health infrastructure forced the distribution of water and water storage. This water storage can create risks related to water or vector-borne diseases such as dengue and leptospirosis.

Haiti

- Since the passage of Tropical Storm Isaac in late August 2012, the number of cholera cases has been increasing each month and the number of deaths is now higher than in earlier months this year. Early reports following the impact of Hurricane Sandy indicate that the same trend is likely to continue.
- Between 24 and 29 October 2012, seven alerts were received from the departments that were most affected by the hurricane: Sud, Sud Est, Nippes, Artibonite and Ouest. A total of 196 new cases and 16 deaths were reported through the alert and response system during that period.
- PAHO/WHO, through its field teams, continues to monitor the situation and provide support to cholera treatment units in all affected departments. According to PROMESS, there are enough medical supplies to treat 72,000 cholera cases and 1,700,000 Aquatabs tablets are available in the warehouse.
- Four PAHO response teams (including clinicians, logisticians and water and sanitation specialists) have been deployed and are supporting health authorities at the department level in the areas of response coordination, investigation of health alerts and provision of supplies to cholera treatment centers, including to decentralized warehouses.
- It is important to note that the interagency response capacity is not at the same level as last year at this time, since many partner agencies have stopped their country operations during the last months.
- Urgent needs include restoring the cholera treatment units destroyed by the storm and to restock the health centers blocked by floods in the most affected departments.

Jamaica

- The Ministry of Health National Emergency Operations Center (MOH NEOC) is directing and coordinating the health sector activities.
- One death has been reported and 237 people injured.
- The loss and needs in the health sector is estimated to be over 249 million Jamaican dollars.
- The Ministry of Health reports that 51 health facilities suffered some form of damage (50% of which are minor). Six of these facilities are hospitals and 39 of which are health centers or community hospitals. The others are health departments or other facilities. As of 31 October, 24 of the 25 hospitals remain fully functional.
- The Annotto Bay Hospital, a 100 bed facility, was the most damaged and the Princess Margaret Hospital also suffered some damage.
- Yesterday, 1 November, a structural engineer recommended by PAHO/WHO arrived to assess the Annotto Bay Hospital.
- A list of needs to intensify a campaign against dengue is being consolidated. Risk reduction activities for dengue fever and leptospirosis are on-going and vector control teams are being strengthened.
- According to OCHA, as of Tuesday, 30 October there were 55 persons still in shelters. Water and electricity has been restored to approximately 80% of the affected population and most schools have reopened.

PAHO/WHO RESPONSE

- PAHO/WHO country offices continue to support the ministries of health and in the evaluation of damage and needs.
- The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at PAHO Headquarters in Washington, DC is monitoring the situation and maintains contact with PAHO/WHO country offices. Staff is on standby to support countries in the development of appeals or proposals for emergency funding if needed.
- One expert was deployed to Jamaica to support disaster management activities in the country, and the PAHO Regional Response Team for the Caribbean remains on standby in case other needs arise in the coming days.
- PAHO/WHO alert and response teams continue to support health authorities and monitor the cholera situation in Haiti.

For more information, visit www.paho.org/disasters

Sources:

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United Nations Emergency Technical Team
Red Cross Movement
OCHA