

HIGHLIGHTS

- The launch of the revised Flash Appeal extends humanitarian planning to 12 months and calls for \$134 million for health.
- Health Cluster partners are working closely with the government on the health aspects of the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, which will lay the groundwork for reconstruction.
- Eight X-ray machines and other radiology equipment arrived in Haiti and will be distributed to hospitals.



Photo: PAHO/WHO

ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

- Seven weeks after the earthquake in Haiti, the country still faces aspects of the emergency response phase, and will for months to come, given the scale and complexity of the crisis.
- Many lives have been saved by the speed and generosity the world showed in its response in the first days and weeks after the earthquake. Nonetheless, there is still a tremendous amount to be done, which is why the U.N. Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, President Clinton, launched the revised Flash Appeal, extending humanitarian planning to 12 months and calling for \$134 million for health.
- As the response moves forward, it will also increasingly integrate disaster risk reduction and emphasize the importance of early recovery activities.
- One of the challenges in coming weeks will be to move patients who remain in hospitals to external locations where they can continue to receive care.
- Health Cluster partners are actively gathering information for the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), a government-led initiative that will lay the groundwork for reconstruction. Health Cluster partners are working closely with the government on the health aspects. Cluster sub-groups are looking at the basic health services package; how this will be delivered and to whom; logistics and technical issues; leadership and stewardship of health; human resources; funding and social protection; and evaluation of the impact on infrastructure. The Ministry of Health has joined the PDNA meetings and all departments are participating actively. The PDNA draft will be reviewed at a meeting of partners on 16-17 March in the Dominican Republic. This will be followed by a final meeting in New York on 21 March of all the major partners, including the government of Haiti, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the UN and the European Commission.
- **Strategy for primary health care:** Health Cluster partners are working with Ministry of Health and the National Crisis Commission on a strategy that will outline a basic package of services for

provision of primary health care. The strategy is still under discussion and is expected to include the following categories: maternal health, child health, immunization, surveillance, mental health, nutrition, gender-based violence, rehabilitation and health promotion. This last aspect is key, with emphasis being placed on using resources available in the community to better reach the public.

- **Information Cell:** The Ministry of Health has requested that the Health Cluster assemble clearer information on the health situation in the country. The Information Cell, formed in response to this request, held its first meeting on 19 February and began work on 25 February. The aim is to gather all available health information in a central location, and to identify gaps. The type of information will include epidemiological surveillance, the availability of health services (i.e., what is up and running, what is damaged) and where displaced people can access these services.
- PAHO/WHO, Occupational Health Program, has initiated a field assessment of working conditions of relief workers. Objectives are to (a) support institutions during the recovery phase and (b) identify priority areas for accident prevention and workers' health protection during recovery, e.g. during building and road construction, solid waste management and protection and training of health care workers.

GAP FILLING

PROVISION OF BASIC HEALTH SERVICES

- Based on lessons learned from previous earthquakes and an expressed need, eight X-ray machines and other radiology equipment have been received in Haiti and will be distributed to hospitals. The equipment was formally handed over to the Ministry of Health at a press conference at Friday, 26 February. This is a joint effort between the International Atomic Energy Agency and PAHO/WHO to re-establish and reinforce basic radiology services in public facilities or institutions closely working with the Ministry of Health.
- A representative from L'Hôpital de la Communauté Haïtienne reported that treatment will be offered free of charge for victims of the earthquake for the next 6 months.
- There are now 160 sites where primary care is provided by 55 international NGOs. This includes both fixed sites and mobile clinics. A survey will be done by Management Science for Health (MSH) with PAHO/WHO and International Rescue Committee (IRC) to identify sites where there is a need for mobile clinics.

OUTBREAK CONTROL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- The epidemiological surveillance system (based on partial information from sentinel sites) does not show an increase in infectious diseases. Respiratory infections are the main cause of illness, followed by trauma/injury, diarrhea and suspected malaria.
- The Epidemiological Update reported through National Sentinel Sites from 25 Jan-23 Feb that the percentage of consultations due to suspected malaria slightly increased from 5% to about 10%; consultations due to watery diarrhea has not changed and remains around 15%; consultations due to injuries decreased from 35% to 5%. Mobile clinics have started surveillance this week and a partial report will be available next week.

DRUGS AND SUPPLIES

- In response to an assessment made by Haiti's national blood program, the American Red Cross sent a fourth shipment of 300 units of blood from donations made in the US. Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Ireland have also made blood donations. To date, more than 2,000 units have been received. The most recent shipment is in response to a request from the national blood programme

and is based on their assessment of local needs.

COORDINATION

- The Health Cluster meetings will now be held on Tuesday and Friday at 4 pm (in the OCHA meeting tent).
- Following the Health Cluster meeting Tuesday, March 2, IOM will organize a meeting to coordinate and come up with a referral strategy and plan.

CONTACTS

Pan American Health Organization

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IMPORTANT LINKS

www.paho.org

www.who.int

<http://onerresponse.info/Disasters/Haiti/Health/Pages/default.aspx>