



*Volunteer nurse Mercedes Nunez treats a patient at International Medical Corps' emergency primary healthcare clinic at High Rock.*

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## SITUATION UPDATE

One month after Hurricane Dorian ravaged the Bahamas, the government and international relief organizations continue their work to provide most basic needs to those in those areas severely affected by the storm, while creating and implementing strategies for economic and social recovery.

Frankie A. Campbell, Minister of Social Services and Development, declared the clean-up of those areas most severely damaged by the storm as a priority in government-led efforts to restore and rebuild lost housing, and ensure the future socioeconomic sustainability of Grand Bahama and Abaco islands. Government agencies continue to carry out assessments of damage to buildings and infrastructure throughout the islands, while utilities are hard at work restoring services, with a number of international NGOs (including International Medical Corps) helping to fill gaps.

As the healthcare system in affected areas gradually recovers, international relief agencies continue to support Ministry of Health (MoH) efforts to meet the needs of people affected by the Category 5 storm. There has been growing concern about the ability to provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, as the initial shock of the disaster fades and a new reality sets in among those whose lives have been severely affected. This has resulted in pressure to ramp up MHPSS services.

As part of its response to these expected needs the MoH is working on strategic messaging to reach the population across many platforms, including radio, social media and print, to raise awareness and provide health education about such issues as mental health, environmental health, chronic non-communicable diseases and prevention of communicable diseases.

## FAST FACTS

- The overall death toll from Hurricane Dorian has risen to 58, with roughly 600 people still reported missing.
- Between September 9 and October 3, International Medical Corps has conducted 538 consultations in the medical facilities we support on Grand Bahama island.
- We have reached hundreds more with information about best practices in healthcare and hygiene, and about where to find medical services on the island.
- Our mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) coordinator conducted a mental health awareness session with 11 members of the pediatric-care staff at Sunrise Medical Center. More awareness sessions and psychological first aid (PFA) training are planned for local health workers next week.

## INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS RESPONSE

Our team of medical volunteers, currently composed of two doctors, seven nurses and one pharmacist, continues to support the island's medical and healthcare needs. From September 9 to October 3, our medical staff has conducted 538 consultations in all medical facilities we support. In addition, our team has directly reached 189 households and 102 individuals through community education services. Our medical staff continue to see maternity patients at Sunrise Medical Center in the capital, Freeport, at clinics in Eight Mile Rock and Hawksbill, and at the Type 1 EMT clinic we have set up in High Rock, which also acts as a base for mobile medical teams that travel to more remote areas in the central and eastern areas of Grand Bahama, including the communities of Pelican Point and McLeans Town. On October 2, we sent a wound care nurse to a newly assigned clinic, Davies House, near Rand Memorial Hospital in Freeport. We plan to send a doctor once or twice a week to this new location, which has recently seen an uptick in patients seeking treatments for hurricane-related wounds.

Our team pharmacist is currently assessing the medication needs at each clinic we support. In recent days, she has delivered medical supplies and medications needed to fill immediate gaps in the clinics' pharmacies.

This week, our water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) technical advisor installed a water point at the High Rock clinic, providing a new source of potable water for community residents to use. Four portable latrines were also installed at the clinic. Our WASH advisor was also able to repair a damaged water point at the Eight Mile Rock clinic, and re-establish running water throughout the facility.



*Our pharmacist, Petra Isenhuth (right), has been assessing medical-supply needs at each clinic where International Medical Corps is operating. Here, she checks supplies at the Eight Mile Rock clinic.*

International Medical Corps' Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Coordinator conducted a mental health awareness session with 11 members of the pediatric-care staff at Sunrise Medical Center, and we plan to conduct more awareness sessions and psychological first aid (PFA) trainings for local health workers next week. By disseminating the information to local health workers, we hope to reach the community with important messaging as well as obtain valuable information that can be used during recovery operations.

International Medical Corps' health and WASH advisors coordinated meetings with doctors from the Grand Bahama Public Health Authority (PHA) to assess the needs for community health trainings, to adapt and curate the needed messaging and to put in place a training plan for 25 doctors, teachers and community leaders, who will then be able to pass the information to the local community. The training has been scheduled, and will run from Tuesday, October 8, through Friday, October 11.