



Medical volunteers survey devastation of the health facility in High Rock, Grand Bahama, following Hurricane Dorian.

FAST FACTS

- As of October 22, International Medical Corps has provided medical consultations and medicines for **824 patients** in all supported clinics.
- International Medical Corps has trained **56 health staff, social services specialists** and **police officers** about mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).
- **255 community members** have attended International Medical Corps MHPSS awareness sessions.

SITUATION UPDATE

As of Monday, October 21, the Royal Bahamas Police Force confirmed that the death toll from Hurricane Dorian had risen to 65. Recovery efforts are ongoing, but with hundreds still missing, the number of fatalities is expected to rise.

This continued uncertainty, along with the devastated infrastructure and social services in Grand Bahama, has exacerbated mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs, especially for individuals with chronic and severe mental health conditions requiring ongoing treatment and support. Displaced from their homes and without routine access to care, many hurricane-affected individuals notably lack consistent mental health treatment options. The Minister of Health of the Bahamas has noted psychological stress, the risk of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress as major concerns moving forward for recovery on the islands.¹

In addition to worsening mental health needs, Hurricane Dorian has affected the majority of municipal water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and infrastructure throughout Grand Bahama. Floods after the hurricane have inundated the sewage systems, resulting in further contamination of inland water resources. Health clinics located in High Rock and Freetown were completely destroyed, while others on the island have suffered significant flood and wind damage.

In Sweetings Cay, a small fishing village located in the far east of Grand Bahama island, power and water has not been fully restored. Local partners are distributing small generators to all households, and a water-well filtration system has been installed to provide 500 liters of potable water per day. Though the structure of the healthcare clinic in Sweetings Cay is still intact, the building was damaged by flood waters that were up to 3 feet (1 meter) high. Despite the

¹ Direct Relief. "After Hurricane Dorian, What's Next? A Conversation with Dr. Duane Sands, Minister of Health of the Bahamas." (21 Oct 2019). Retrieved on October 25, 2019, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/bahamas/after-hurricane-dorian-what-s-next-conversation-dr-duane-sands-minister-health>

devastating impacts, the residents of Sweetings Cay have reported no major health concerns and no one from the town has been reported missing.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS RESPONSE

Since September 6, International Medical Corps has been working with the people and the government of the Bahamas to provide medical services and medicines through mobile medical teams, support in nine primary healthcare centers in the eastern and western part of Grand Bahama island, and through an emergency health facility set up in High Rock, in the central part of the island. International Medical Corps' WASH specialists are supporting infrastructure needs to prevent the spread of disease, while our MHPSS specialist is addressing the needs of individuals who have lost loved ones and livelihoods.



Dr. Ian Brown, an International Medical Corps volunteer, conducts a patient consultation in Sweetings Cay.

On October 14, following a request from Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Public Hospitals Authority (PHA), International

Medical Corps deployed an assessment team to Sweetings Cay. During our assessment, the team met with patients suffering mainly from chronic diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes, and from simple wounds caused by construction and rehabilitation efforts. Our MHPSS specialist conducted home visits with the remaining families in Sweetings Cay, providing support and information regarding mental health and psychosocial trauma following a disaster, and the services available to families. Through these home visits, the MHPSS team met with one family who survived Hurricane Dorian hiding in a closet. Their home was completely destroyed.

"The entire family survived the hurricane closed up in a closet in their house, which was completely destroyed. The mother

was obviously distressed and expressed that she frequently felt despair about the situation. She also conveyed concerns about the younger child, who has shown signs of regression to developmental stage of bed-wetting, being easily scared and crying whenever there was rain after the hurricane". – Andria Spyridou, International Medical Corps MHPSS Specialist

As of October 22, International Medical Corps had provided 824 patient consultations at the nine clinics where we provide services in Grand Bahama. The majority of patients seen are suffering from chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes, require urgent prescription refills, or are suffering from chronic wounds and minor injuries. Around 87 percent of the patients are 18 years of age or older, and half are female.



Conducting a home visit in Sweetings Cay.



An International Medical Corps team assesses damage near the High Rock Clinic in Grand Bahama.

International Medical Corps' MHPSS team is continuing to work closely with the Bahamas Mental Health and Social Services staff to address the most urgent needs across Grand Bahama. The team has conducted a series of mental health and psychosocial support workshops, focusing on self-care, psychological first aid and positive coping mechanisms. Fifty-six people, including health staff, social service specialists and police officers, attended these sessions. Additionally, the MHPSS team is conducting awareness sessions with community members. So far, 225 residents have participated in these events, including pregnant women and children. The team is also conducting home-visits regularly, which a volunteer nurse has reported has been particularly helpful for residents living in senior homes—a population who often are not reached by these services.



International Medical volunteers conduct an assessment of a woman who fell from her wheelchair at the Cancer Association of Grand Bahama.

In addition, International Medical Corps also is working with a local contractor to provide potable water to residents in the eastern part of Grand Bahama island. The WASH team has installed water bladders and faucets at our health clinic in High Rock, and is continuing to monitor water quality as city services resume in the area. The team has also procured an incinerator for the High Rock facility and is working with Rand Memorial Hospital in Freeport to conduct daily follow-ups and support the medical-waste management system at the hospital. Finally, International Medical Corps is establishing environmental-waste standard operating procedures in fixed and mobile health facilities, working closely with the MoH and PHA, and is providing training and support for local clinical staff to prevent hospital-acquired infections.

As the acute emergency phase wanes, International Medical Corps is dedicated to supporting the MoH and PHA to ensure continuity of services and care for residents in Grand Bahama island. As part of these efforts, International Medical Corps will continue to focus on addressing needs related to health and clinical support, WASH and MHPSS.