



An International Medical Corps staff member oversees delivery of water tanks to the Barbary Hall Community Center, which will begin seeing patients this week.

In early July, Hurricane Beryl tore through the Caribbean, Yucatan Peninsula and United States, leaving behind billions of dollars in crop and infrastructure damage,¹ extensive power outages, food and water shortages, and reported death tolls of at least 19 in the Caribbean and 36 in Texas.^{2,3} Affected communities in Jamaica and Texas face significant challenges in their recovery, including the compromised operational capacity of health facilities and hospitals, food and water insecurity, lost wages and damaged shelters. Communities also face an increased risk of water- and vector-borne diseases, among other exacerbated health concerns.

In **Jamaica**, the clean-up and reconstruction from Hurricane Beryl's estimated \$6.4 million in damage is still ongoing. The storm caused severe damage to many health centers and hospitals in Saint Elizabeth, affecting roofs and windows, and flooding files, supplies and medical equipment. It is anticipated that the rehabilitation and construction of these facilities will take six to nine months. Several health clinics have redirected patients and services to surrounding hospitals and centers, and temporary facilities have been erected to ensure continuity of care. Black River Hospital is currently providing replacement services for three non-functioning clinics in the region, and several community and health centers are serving as temporary centers for clinics undergoing reconstruction. As health operations and services shift, there is an urgent need for construction and medical supplies and equipment.

In **Texas**, extensive power outages and an extreme heat wave following the storm proved devastating, presenting life-threatening risks for communities across nearly 180 miles, from Galveston to north of Houston. At least 36 deaths after the storm have been reported, with more than half due to complications surrounding heat or power outages.³ Though power has now been restored, many people concentrated in economically challenged communities in Houston were without power for nearly two weeks.⁴

FAST FACTS

- Since Hurricane Beryl hit Jamaica on July 3, there has been an ongoing need for shelter rehabilitation and access to medical supplies, food, and water, sanitation and hygiene. Many health centers and facilities in Saint Elizabeth Parish are nonoperational due to infrastructure and equipment damage; services there have been redirected to other centers or temporary facilities.
- At least 36 deaths have been reported in Texas after the hurricane, with more than half due to complications surrounding heat and power loss. Texas remains under an excessive heat advisory, and vulnerable communities in Houston continue to suffer from damaged health facilities, houses and apartment buildings, as well as increased food insecurity and exacerbated health conditions.

OUR RESPONSE

- In Jamaica, International Medical Corps is partnering with the Ministry of Health and the Saint Elizabeth regional health team to rehabilitate and support non-functioning and temporary health facilities, and provide training.
- In Texas, International Medical Corps is partnering with networks of community health centers to provide emergency response and recovery supplies for staff and patients, and to provide training programs to prepare facilities and communities for future emergencies.

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/damage-hurricane-beryl-may-cost-insurers-27-bl-us-kcc-says-2024-07-11/>

² <https://tweathercenter.com/2024/07/11/hurricane-beryl-death-toll-now-at-33/>

³ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/hurricane-beryl-death-toll-in-texas-rises-to-36-including-more-who-lost-power-in-extreme-heat>

⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/25/us/centerpoint-houston-power-outages-apologize/index.html>

The heat wave and power outages immediately following Beryl created challenges for affected communities in Houston. With no electricity, households were forced to endure sweltering temperatures without functioning air-conditioning or fans, increasing the risk of heat-related conditions for vulnerable populations, including people managing chronic illnesses or those who rely on battery-powered medical devices. Damage to water/sanitation infrastructure meant that some people were at increased risk of communicable or water-borne diseases. Hurricane Beryl—coming on the heels of a storm that occurred six weeks earlier—highlights the vulnerability of communities repeatedly impacted by disasters and demonstrates how difficult it can be for individuals, families and communities to recover.

Many health clinics and hospitals in Texas were impacted by power outages, infrastructure damage and overcrowding following the storm, and are stretched as they work to meet the many needs of the community. Communities are working to recover quickly and prepare for additional anticipated weather-related events, as Hurricane Beryl marks only the beginning of this year's Atlantic hurricane season.

International Medical Corps Response

In **Jamaica**, International Medical Corps is coordinating response efforts with the National Healthcare Enhancement Foundation (NHEF), an arm of the Jamaican Ministry of Health (MoH) to support three temporary health centers, a hospital that is replacing services for three neighboring non-functioning clinics and the Saint Elizabeth Regional Health Center, home to the offices of the regional health team.

To aid with the construction of temporary facilities, International Medical Corps has already distributed 2,373 items for construction activities, including water tanks, PVC pipes, shower heads, cement and paint rollers to ensure proper infrastructure necessary for patient care. These materials were critical in the rehabilitation activities of Barbary Hall, a temporary health facility that is now functional and will begin to receive patients this week. International Medical Corps also provided partner facilities with urgent medical supplies, including diagnostic kits, wound-care and hygiene kits, first-aid kits and flashlights. Additionally, we have procured and distributed medical equipment including IV poles, blood pressure monitors, stethoscopes and scales. In support of the Saint Elizabeth regional health team and at the request of the MoH, International Medical Corps helped provide a mosquito fogging machine. Mosquito control is especially important in the aftermath of a hurricane to reduce mosquito populations and decrease the risk of vector-borne diseases such as dengue. So far, we have delivered approximately 2,500 items to temporary health facilities across Jamaica.

International Medical Corps will continue to support facilities for six months by providing medical equipment and supplies. We are also working with NHEF to provide training programs to healthcare staff and community members, including Mass Casualty Management, Primary Trauma Care, Stop the Bleed and Emergency Preparedness.

In **Texas**, International Medical Corps has partnered with key nonprofit community health center organizations located throughout the greater Houston region that serve vulnerable and economically challenged communities, including unhoused, immigrant and low-income residents—many of whom have endured the brunt of the impact from repeated climate-related events.

The team has worked closely with staff and leadership of networks of community health centers to identify urgently needed supplies that would support their immediate recovery efforts. We quickly distributed critical relief and recovery supplies to partner clinics, including tarps, canned foods, headlamps, and individual wound-care and hygiene kits to five partner community health centers located in the most affected areas throughout the greater Houston region.

In collaboration with health center partners, we have identified other critical supply needs and opportunities for high-impact program interventions. With additional resources, we would be able to expand our work to support recovery efforts that are directly linked to strengthening communities' ability to respond to extreme climate events, in anticipation of what is predicted to be one of the worst hurricane seasons on record.

International Medical Corps will continue to work closely with healthcare organizations serving under-resourced and at-risk communities to design and implement programming that equips community health centers and community members to better prepare for future emergencies. We will implement skills-based health center emergency management training for health center staff to strengthen the resilience of such centers in the face of increasingly destructive weather events so they can remain operational, meet urgent health needs and help keep their communities healthy as they recover.



Staff from Houston's 5th Ward Clinic and International Medical Corps with the tarps we provided to the clinic.