



International Medical Corps volunteer Dr. Erika Czerwinski conducts a mental health patient consultation at the Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College general population shelter.

Communities across the Southeast are recovering from the impacts of back-to-back Hurricanes Helene and Milton, which struck the Florida coast within less than two weeks of each other. The two hurricanes are responsible for at least 255 deaths, extreme levels of rainfall, flooding and landslides, and at least \$80 billion¹ in infrastructure damage. As affected communities continue to undertake recovery efforts in Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and Tennessee, and adjust to a new normal, the long-term health, housing and infrastructure implications of the storms and the impact of back-to-back events on communities remain significant.

Hurricane Helene hit the Big Bend region of Florida on September 26 as a Category 4 storm and is responsible for at least 232 deaths across six states. The hurricane tore through inland communities of Georgia, the Carolinas and Tennessee, causing catastrophic flooding, landslides and extensive cell, power and water outages—isolating communities and complicating recovery efforts. **Hurricane Milton** made landfall south of Tampa, Florida, on October 9 as a Category 3 storm, bringing heavy rainfall and multiple outbreaks of tornadoes as it cut across the peninsula. Milton flooded houses, destroyed roads, buildings, water and sewage lines, and is so far responsible for 24 deaths.² As residents return from evacuation and clear the debris, community needs are anticipated to rise.

In **Florida**, where communities were impacted by both Hurricane Helene and Milton, infrastructure damage is severe. Many hospitals and other health facilities evacuated or closed in anticipation of Hurricane Milton; however, several community health clinics that serve high-needs populations received significant building damage, resulting in long-term closure, subsequently reducing available healthcare for impacted communities. As communities engage in clean-up and

FAST FACTS

- **Hurricane Helene** and **Hurricane Milton** made landfall in Florida just two weeks apart as Category 4 and Category 3 hurricanes, resulting in a total of at least 255 deaths and extensive infrastructure damage across Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and Tennessee. Many affected communities across several states have yet to regain power or access to clean water.
- The short-term damage and long-term implications of the storm are extensive, with economic and property losses from Hurricane Helene anticipated to be as much as \$250 billion.
- In 2024, there have been **15 named Atlantic storms**, including **six hurricanes** that have made landfall in the United States and Territories. These storms have caused more than **320 deaths** in the US and Territories alone.

OUR RESPONSE

- In response to **Hurricane Helene**, International Medical Corps deployed teams to Florida, Georgia and North Carolina, and is supporting partners in Tennessee.
- In North Carolina, International Medical Corps deployed a team of 29 volunteers to provide medical and behavioral health services in three shelters and one community-care station in Buncombe County, where hard-hit Asheville is located.
- In response to **Hurricane Milton**, International Medical Corps is coordinating with Florida Association of Community Health Centers (FACHC) and two local FQHC networks to meet urgent needs.
- To date, across affected states, International Medical Corps has distributed 1,512 wound-care kits, 10,144 hygiene kits and 18,951 hygiene items, including first-aid supplies, mosquito repellent, handwashing stations, water bladders, 20 portable toilets, 14 1,000 gallon water tanks and 6,000 gallons of water to 77 health centers and local partners.

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/10/18/flood-insurance-hurricane-helene-milton/>

² <https://www.news-journalonline.com/story/weather/hurricane/2024/10/15/hurricane-milton-death-toll-florida-tuesday/75683596007/>

return to their homes, health needs are increasing. For example, there has been an uptick in reports of water-borne diseases or bacteria due to still and contaminated water.³

In northwestern **North Carolina**, where communities were hit hard by Hurricane Helene, access to power and water are slowly being restored. However, there is still significant need for shelter and healthcare services. In Buncombe County, long-term solutions to shelter needs are being enacted and community-care stations have been established to provide hot food, water, wi-fi and basic hygiene services. As the weather cools, there is a concern that people who are unhoused and those in mountainous areas will need additional support. There has been a reported outbreak of pertussis (whooping cough) in affected communities, and several COVID cases have also now been reported within shelters. Because the risk of infectious disease—combined with increased cold, flu and COVID cases regionally—is rising in the facilities, isolation plans are being implemented within shelters by shelter management and incident command teams.

In affected communities of **Georgia** and **Tennessee**, water and power are also being restored; however, impacted people remain vulnerable to long-term challenges surrounding housing insecurity, financial loss and increased health risks.

International Medical Corps' Response

In **Florida**, International Medical Corps is coordinating closely with the Florida Association of Community Health Centers (FACHC), existing health facility partners, and county- and state-run distribution centers to identify and disseminate urgently needed emergency supplies, equipment and other items in response to **Hurricane Milton**. One federally qualified health center (FQHC) network, located south of Tampa, was heavily impacted by Hurricane Milton and has reported that four of their health facilities are closed due to the severe damage incurred. International Medical Corps is working to support the reopening of their facilities. The team continues to support partners impacted by Hurricane Helene, including Steinhatchee Community Health Center, to which we provided a trauma kit to effectively address urgent community healthcare needs, as the nearest emergency department is located 45 minutes away.

Across **Georgia**, **North Carolina** and **Tennessee**, International Medical Corps is continuing our response to the impacts of **Hurricane Helene**. To date, we have facilitated the shipment and distribution of 10,144 hygiene kits, 1,512 wound-care kits and 18,951 hygiene and emergency items to 77 sites—including health facilities, community centers and relief centers—across the region. Additionally, we have delivered 1,000-gallon tanks to 14 clinics, as well as 6,000 gallons of water and 20 portable toilets to health facilities, to ensure they could restore and continue their operations and services.

International Medical Corps is providing direct services to shelter residents in the Asheville area of North Carolina through a team of 29 clinical volunteers. The team is made up of both local and out-of-state nurses, clinical psychologists, social workers, a pharmacist, and medical providers—such as nurse practitioners, doctors, and physician assistants—and has been embedded into two general-population and one medical-needs shelter to provide 24-hour essential primary medical care and behavioral health services. Since October 13, the team has provided 152 medical consultations and 72 behavioral health consultations. The medical-needs shelter concluded its services on October 21, as all patients have been successfully discharged and/or placed in other facilities. As cold weather approaches, and pertussis, flu and COVID cases increase regionally, the team is working to support vaccination efforts, flu and COVID testing, and isolation plans within the shelters to reduce the transmission of cases. Though the need for medical and behavioral health services in shelters continues to be significant, International Medical Corps is coordinating closely with the County Department of Health and Human Services and the Red Cross to develop sustainable long-term solutions.

In addition, with the support of local FQHC network Western North Carolina Health Services, and in conjunction with the National Guard, International Medical Corps has established a mobile medical unit (MMU) at a community-care station (CCS) in Buncombe County, where community members can utilize restroom and shower services, laundry, wi-fi and cell service, and receive hot food and water. Community members have so far utilized the MMU at this site for urgent care and medication refills.

International Medical Corps is also coordinating with local partners—including the North Carolina Primary Care Association (PCA), the National Association of Rural Health Clinics and the National Association of Community Health Centers—to identify and support the needs of FQHC and health partners across the state. With International Medical Corps' support, 20 health facilities that were offline in the wake of Hurricane Helene are now operational and providing



International Medical Corps volunteer nurse Shiv Kumarie conducts a medical consultation at the medical-needs shelter at The Ferguson Center for Allied Health and Workforce Development.

³ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/10/18/health/dual-hurricanes-milton-and-helene-cause-flesh-eating-bacteria-cases-to-rise-in-florida/index.html>

essential services. Though water has been restored to some health facilities, many counties remain under a boil-water advisory, severely limiting access to potable water. To support water and sanitation needs, the team delivered 1,000-gallon water tanks to 14 clinics, two portable toilets each to 10 different health facilities and has delivered 6,000 gallons of water, including to rural and hard-to-reach facilities. In addition to providing water supplies, we have provided the 14 clinics with portable showers, camping toilets, handwashing stations, tables, chairs, tarps and canopies.

In **Tennessee**, International Medical Corps has delivered 200 doses of tetanus vaccines and 200 doses of Hepatitis A vaccines to FQHC network Cherokee Health Systems, to be provided to community members as they clean up and rebuild damaged buildings and infrastructure. International Medical Corps has also provided FQHC network Rural Medical Services with more than 3,000 hygiene items, including hand sanitizer, diapers, insect repellent and sinks; 1,200 medical supply items, first aid kits and insulin cookers; and 200 relief and recovery supplies, including work gloves and batteries. The team continues to coordinate closely with local partners to understand and support their needs as services and operations are restored.



A staff member connects a water source to a 1,000 gallon water tank after delivering it to an FQHC facility in Asheville, North Carolina.

In **Georgia**, International Medical Corps is working with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA), the Georgia PCA, the Georgia Department of Public Health’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Medical Associates Plus, an FQHC network with 19 health centers. International Medical Corps delivered 1,620 hygiene kits to a GEMA managed Disaster Recovery Center, to be distributed to affected Richmond County residents. This week the team delivered a large supply of pharmaceutical supplies, including insulin, medical commodities and vaccines for pneumonia, shingles and influenza, to two Medical Associates Plus facilities in Wren and Augusta, because many health facilities’ cold-chain storage and supplies were lost or damaged in the power outage following Hurricane Helene.

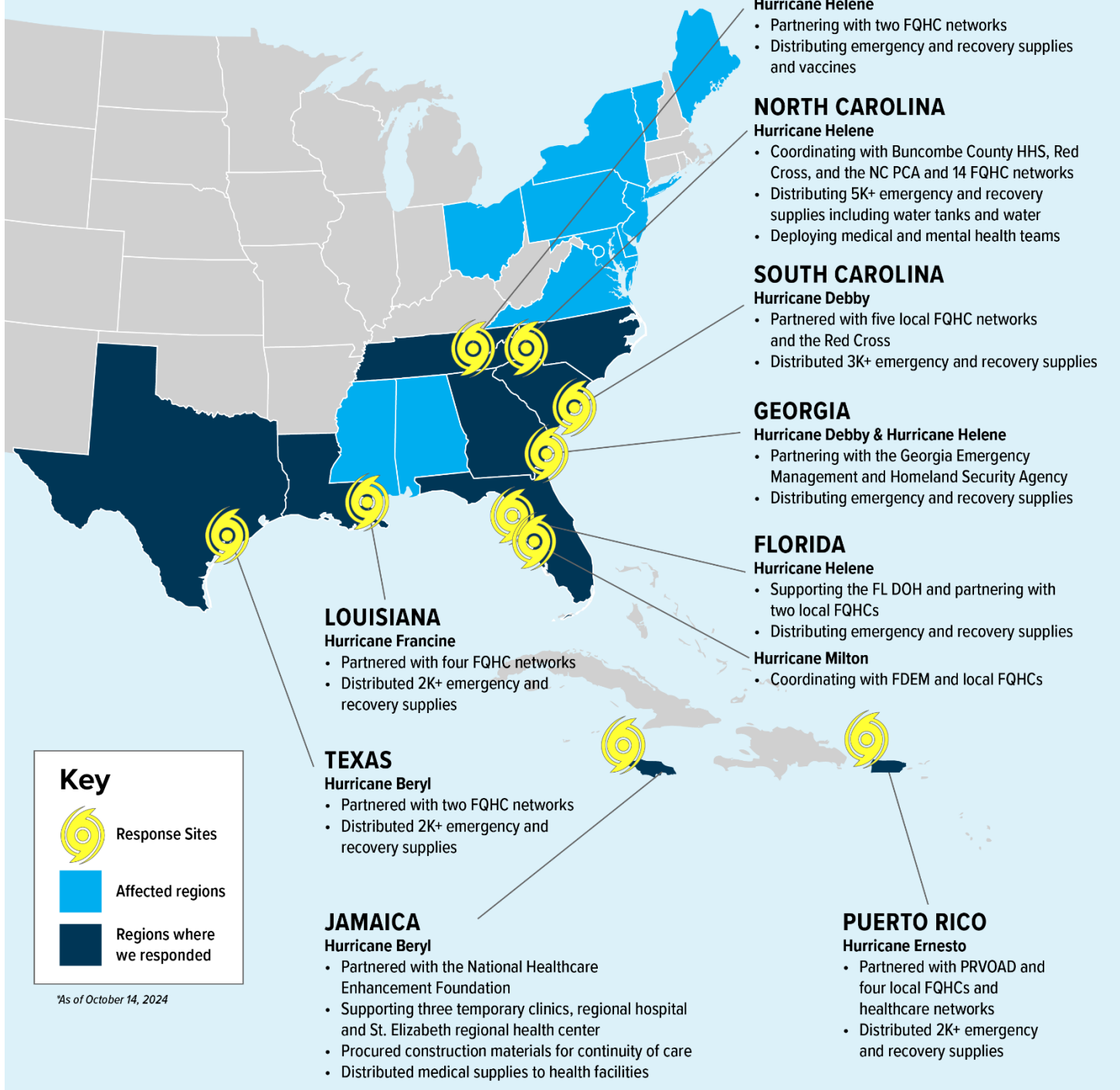
International Medical Corps in the US and Territories

International Medical Corps has been an emergency responder in the United States and Caribbean since 2005, when we partnered with local community clinics overwhelmed by Hurricane Katrina. In the US, International Medical Corps works with national, state and local partners and agencies in the healthcare system to deploy emergency response teams in response to disasters and address the significant challenges that face domestic healthcare services.

Response to Hurricane Helene			
4 states	29 volunteers	225 medical and behavioral health consultations*	
77 health facilities supported	17 FQHCs supported	3 state governments supported	2 non-profit organizations supported
1,512 wound-care kits distributed	10,144 hygiene kits distributed	18,951 hygiene products distributed	1,150 Other relief and recovery supplies distributed
82 food items	1,831 units of medical supplies	95 water and sanitation items	14 water tanks
435,294 indirect beneficiaries			

*services since October 13, 2024

2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season Response*



*As of October 14, 2024