



An International Medical Corps consultant provides mental health care and distributes critical resources to fire-affected residents returning to their homes in the Pacific Palisades.

Three weeks after the destructive wildfires first ignited in Los Angeles, the physical and mental health needs of affected residents remain at an all-time high—an indication of the long road to recovery facing Los Angeles. The Palisades and Eaton Fires, which first broke out on January 7 and have since burned 40,000 acres of land, are almost completely contained, and other California fires are now largely under control. However, the human impact and devastation from these fires remains.

The American Red Cross continues to operate multiple shelters and community locations around the region, to meet the increased demand for housing, shelter and financial support. However, nearly a month after the beginning of the crisis, many immediate response resources and initiatives have now concluded, leaving affected residents to navigate the aftermath. As community members face the fact that this is their new reality, psychosocial and mental health needs have skyrocketed.

Authorities have cleared residents to return to their neighborhoods to assess the damage, collect belongings and make appropriate next steps. However, many families and individuals have found themselves at a loss for how to proceed.

International Medical Corps' Response

Headquartered in Los Angeles, International Medical Corps deployed an Emergency Response Team on January 8, within 24 hours of the fires' outbreak. We continue to work closely with national, state, county and local responders—including the American Red Cross, the California Department of Public Health, the California Emergency Medical Services Authority, the LA Mayor's office, the California Primary Care Association and the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County—to identify and meet the needs of community members.

FAST FACTS

- The Los Angeles area wildfires are nearly fully contained, but the long-term impact on many community members is far from over. The fires have damaged more than 16,000 structures, including homes, schools, community centers and places of worship, and have left many remaining structures and areas uninhabitable.
- Though many residents have been cleared to return to their homes to survey the damage, health risks remain in these destroyed regions.
- Nearly a month after the fires first ignited, available resources to affected community members are diminishing. However, physical and emotional needs remain great, as residents grapple with loss and uncertainty.

OUR RESPONSE

- International Medical Corps deployed an emergency response team to the Los Angeles area within 24 hours of the fires' outbreak.
- 37 medical and mental health professionals have been deployed to deliver direct medical and mental health services to residents within two regional shelters, and to provide mental health services in communities.
- The mental health team has developed tailored [mental health resources](#) to distribute to families and individuals affected by the fires, with referrals to free helplines, phone applications and exercises to process the change and loss.
- The team has so far distributed:
 - more than 25,000 response, recovery and medical items, including air purifiers, nebulizer compressors, bags, medicine bottles, adult diapers and children's toys;
 - 4,256 hygiene kits, 4,176 wound-care kits and 10,254 face masks; and
 - communication equipment for internet service to shelters, health centers and community-based organizations.
- International Medical Corps continues to coordinate closely with local, state and regional agencies, including the Los Angeles Mayor's Office, California Department of Public Health, California Emergency Medical Services Authority, California Primary Care Association, California Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County, the Red Cross, and local organizations, shelters and health centers serving low-income and other vulnerable groups.

International Medical Corps is committed to staying and serving affected Los Angeles residents to support long-term recovery.

Over the course of the response, International Medical Corps has deployed 37 medical and mental health professionals—many of whom are California and Los Angeles locals—to provide critical medical and mental health care in shelters, distribution centers and re-entry points.

Our medical teams are now providing 24/7 medical and mental health care in the Red Cross-managed shelter at the Pasadena Convention Center, serving more than 300 people displaced by the Eaton Fire, and will soon transition to become the primary medical provider at Westwood Recreation Center, serving more than 100 people displaced by the Palisades Fire. Since January 20, the team has conducted 256 provider consultations and assessments and provided 140 residents with primary nursing care with medication administration. As resources begin to transition out, our teams are working to rapidly deploy additional qualified medical and mental health professionals to meet increased needs.



An International Medical Corps medical team in the Red Cross-managed Pasadena Convention Center shelter, which houses upwards of 300 residents each night.

The mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) team continues to actively provide community-based mental health services to affected residents, and have been strategically stationed in a variety of locations and sites, including drive-through locations such as the Santa Monica Pier, community hubs and shelters. The teams have provided active care by listening, making personal connections with residents and first responders, and sharing [free mental health resources](#) that have been widely shared and utilized by other entities and organizations, including Cal Fire. Since January 17, our teams have provided mental health services in both English and Spanish at four sites, have conducted 453 consultations and reached more than 1,274 people through outreach. At the request of the American Red Cross, beginning Friday, January 31, our mental health teams will be stationed at new “Connecting with the Community” pop-up locations where community members will gather to receive resources.

International Medical Corps’ mental health team is made up of many licensed social workers and other mental health professionals who have either experienced the damage and destruction of wildfires first-hand or whose expertise lies in caring for people affected specifically by fires. The team continues to collaborate closely with Cal Fire, the Los Angeles Fire Department, the Red Cross, FEMA and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

International Medical Corps has also distributed urgently needed relief and response supplies to 13 different sites and partners, including shelters, federally qualified health centers (which provide medical services to low-income and other vulnerable populations), community-based organizations, local non-profits and large associations, and government entities. The team has delivered more than 21,000 hygiene items, 1,283 medical supplies, 784 air-quality items, 10,254 KN95 or N95 face masks, and 4,176 first-aid and wound-care kits, among other units of supplies. Items have been distributed directly to community members affected by the Palisades, Eaton and Hughes fires and to partners such as the USC Street Medicine team, health centers, other local organizations and government agencies. Our teams have supported two community-based organizations—Dream Center and It’s Bigger than Us—by providing base camp supplies with critical materials that include canopies, dry bags and toolkits. We are continuing to partner with local organizations to explore ways to support long-term recovery for impacted community members. International Medical Corps has also provided critical communication equipment and internet connectivity to shelters to support internet connections for residents, staff and first responders as they contact FEMA, work, landlords and more.

International Medical Corps is directly supporting various federally qualified health centers that serve vulnerable populations. As many health center patients and staff have been directly impacted by the wildfires, International Medical Corps is working to meet the short- and long-term needs. We provided housing allowances to for one federally qualified health center with 15 frontline healthcare workers who lost their homes in the fires, and are working to provide funds to offset patient copays and prescription refills, supporting low-income populations so they are able to continue to access and receive care. International Medical Corps is continuing to identify and meet the ongoing needs of health centers, local partners and the community at large as they work to recover from the devastating impacts of these January wildfires.

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 to deploy emergency response teams in response to disasters and address the significant challenges that face domestic healthcare services.

In the last seven years, International Medical Corps has engaged and supported a partner network of more than 275 hospitals, clinics, health and health-related facilities, and non-profit organizations across 18 states and territories in the United States, delivering health resources, services and training to more than 6 million patients and providers. International Medical Corps has collaborated since 2020 with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Services, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and local partner organizations.

In 2020 and 2021, International Medical Corps implemented a robust response to the COVID-19 outbreak nationwide. In the greater Los Angeles area, we deployed emergency medical field units and equipment to seven LA-area safety-net hospitals, delivered training and personal protective equipment to 51 LA-area long-term eldercare facilities and 176 LA-area health workers, managed a vaccination site at Kedren Community Health Center in south LA that delivered 140,000 vaccinations, and distributed 305 pieces of medical equipment and more than 2 million pieces of personal protective equipment to LA-area hospitals, health facilities and emergency medical services. In 2021, International Medical Corps conducted a multi-component project in California's Central Valley to build the capacity of vulnerable populations in wildfire-impacted communities to better withstand and recover from wildfires.

Response to LA Wildfires

13 sites supported	37 medical and MHPSS professionals deployed
4,256 hygiene Kits distributed	1,280 first-aid kits distributed
17,048 hygiene products distributed	10,254 masks distributed
7,283 medical supplies distributed	2,896 wound-care kits distributed
827 other relief & recovery supplies distributed	784 air-quality items distributed
453 MHPSS consultations	1,274 participants in MHPSS outreach
302 medical consultations	155 patients given primary nursing care
19,739 direct beneficiaries	83,702 indirect beneficiaries