



Hurricane Maria Relief, Puerto Rico

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Organization: Real Medicine Foundation Puerto Rico (www.realmedicinefoundation.org)
Project title: Hurricane Maria Relief
Project location: Municipalities of Vega Alta, Dorado, Naranjito, and surrounding areas in Puerto Rico



Vega Alta Clinic volunteers preparing hygiene and multivitamin kits for community outreaches

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Background

On September 20, 2017, Category 4 Hurricane Maria hit the US territory of Puerto Rico. The winds, 155 miles per hour at landfall, completely wiped out the island's power grid and phone towers. A flash flood emergency was declared in central Puerto Rico, and the island experienced record flooding. Prior to the hurricane, Puerto Rico's infrastructure was weak, and the storm left the small island crippled. Across the island, cities reported collapsed bridges and severe damage to roadways. Many homes, businesses, and public buildings were also damaged or destroyed. As of April 2018, much of Puerto Rico remains without power, clean water, or sufficient medical supplies.

After our initial needs assessment in October 2017, RMF Founder and CEO Dr. Martina Fuchs visited Puerto Rico in early December 2017, strengthening ties with local authorities, medical professionals, and organizations. RMF then began working closely with Dr. Luis Gonzalez Bermudez, who oversees 5 medical facilities in the Vega Alta municipality. Thanks to support from LDS Charities and individual donors, we began supporting the operations of these 5 health clinics and hospitals, and Dr. Martina Fuchs returned in February 2018 to guide our Puerto Rico team as per next steps of the program. Through RMF, the clinics are also receiving essential medical supplies, dietary supplements, safety equipment, and personal hygiene products from Direct Relief. These supplies are used to serve patients in the clinics, support community outreaches, and contribute to the safety of local maintenance and construction workers.

Direct Relief Shipments

During the month of April, RMF Puerto Rico continued to distribute supplies received in the third and fourth shipments from Direct Relief, which included multivitamins, pediatric supplements, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, soap, body wash, shampoo, Vaseline, sunscreen, surgical medical supplies, stethoscopes, and safety materials such as safety helmets, safety glasses, bactericidal water tablets, and lamps. We also received the fifth Direct Relief shipment on April 19, 2018, containing insulin for diabetic patients. OTC supplies and hygiene products were distributed through the outreaches at Naranjito, Dorado, and Vega Alta as shown below. We coordinated with different clinics, nursing homes, communities, and government agencies and also provided insulin to diabetic patients.

Fifth Shipment

On April 19, 2018, we received the fifth shipment from Direct Relief, containing insulin for diabetic patients. The shipment was valued at \$27,938. These supplies have been partially distributed to diabetic patients, with remaining supplies stored safely in our warehouse to be distributed in other communities.



Insulin received

Community Health Outreaches

RMF Puerto Rico has been continually providing health outreaches throughout rural and urban areas most impacted by Hurricane Maria, focusing our efforts on inland towns where health services and support are most needed. Thanks to the in-kind donations from Direct Relief, as well as the support of LDS Charities and individual donors, we have been able to conduct 15 outreaches during the month of April 2018, providing community members with **1,675** free hygiene products and **1,251** multivitamins, **72** medical supplies, and **818** OTC medicines. Health education is also provided at the events, and beneficiaries included many children, teenagers, and the elderly. Doctors' offices and clinics have also been supported with medical supplies and equipment, such as stethoscopes.

During this month, RMF Puerto Rico held outreaches in the urban area of Dorado, as well as the rural areas of Naranjito and Vega Alta. We visited communities, clinics, doctor's offices, and nursing homes. Thanks to the donations from Direct Relief, we will be able to continue offering these essential health and hygiene supplies to the community.

Weeks 1 & 2: April 1–15, 2018

During the first and second weeks of April 2018, RMF Puerto Rico provided community members with 637 multivitamins, 615 OTC medicines, and 607 hygiene products. We also supported a local doctor's office with 60 medical supplies and a clinic with 2 stethoscopes:

- 498 multivitamins, 176 hygiene products, 60 medical supplies, and 591 OTC medicines were distributed at Dr. Jorge Holguin's medical office in Naranjito, April 4, 2018.
- 48 hygiene products and 48 multivitamins were distributed at Casa Angel De Luz in Dorado, April 8, 2018.
- 24 hygiene products, 24 multivitamins, and 24 OTC medicines, as well as 2 stethoscopes were distributed at the Angelorum Clinic in Dorado, April 8, 10, 11, 14, 2018.
- 10 multivitamins and 74 hygiene products were distributed at the Department of Family Affairs of Puerto Rico in Dorado, April 11, 2018.
- 24 multivitamins and 120 hygiene products were distributed at the Arenales I Community in Dorado, April 12, 2018.
- 33 multivitamins and 165 hygiene products were distributed at the San Carlos Community in Dorado, April 12, 2018.

The first and third outreaches were carried out by RMF team member Juan Carlos Heredia, the second was conducted by RMF's Dr. Luis Gonzalez Bermudez, and the last three outreaches were facilitated by additional RMF team members as needed, including Marisol Espinosa, Dr. Emilio Rivera, and Dr. Luis Gonzalez Bermudez.

Dr. Jorge Holguin's Medical Office

On April 4, 2018, we held an outreach at Dr. Jorge Holguin's medical office, located in the town of Naranjito in the central region of Puerto Rico. During Hurricane Maria, many homes, businesses, roads, bridges, and government buildings in the area suffered major damage from the strong winds and heavy rain. Many patients are assisted at Dr. Holguin's medical office on a daily basis, and we were glad to boost the clinic's services through this outreach.



Over-the-counter (OTC) outreach at Dr. Jorge Holguin Medical Office

Casa Angel de Luz

On April 8, 2018, we visited Casa Angel de Luz, which is a nursing home for the elderly. Casa Angel de Luz is located in the Higuillar neighborhood of Dorado and provides elderly residents with care and accommodation in a family setting, maintaining an atmosphere of peace and harmony.



RMF's Dr. Luis (right) at Casa Angel de Luz



Beneficiary of the outreach at Casa Angel de Luz



Elderly patients at Casa Angel de Luz outreach

Angelorum Medical Aesthetics Pain Clinic

During the first two weeks of April, we held several outreaches at the Angelorum Medical Aesthetics Pain Clinic in Dorado. The clinic works to improve patients' quality of life by addressing physical, mental, and spiritual needs, uniting traditional and alternative medicine to uphold fair treatment and humane values.



An elderly patient being attended by RMF's Dr. Luis and volunteer Registered Nurse Jeannette Crespo

Department of Family Affairs of Puerto Rico

On April 11, 2018 we visited the Department of Family Affairs, which is responsible for all matters related to the family and social work in Puerto Rico. Multivitamins and hygiene products were provided for 12 families.



Rep. Jessica Rojas receiving multivitamins and hygiene products for the Department of Family Affairs

Arenales I Community

On April 12, 2018, we visited the Arenales I community of Dorado, which is located in northern Puerto Rico. Residents live with few economic resources and still do not have electricity or drinking water seven months after Hurricane Maria. We were able to provide over-the-counter (OTC) vitamins and hygiene products to 24 families in this community.



Volunteers sorting supplies from Direct Relief



Hygiene/multivitamin kits for the Arenales I outreach



Volunteers at the outreach in the Arenales I community

San Carlos Community

Later the same day, we visited the San Carlos community of Dorado, which is also located in northern Puerto Rico. Residents live with few economic resources and still do not have electricity or drinking water seven months after Hurricane Maria. We were able to provide over-the-counter (OTC) vitamins and hygiene products to 33 families in this community.



Volunteer medical students preparing OTC kits for the outreach in the San Carlos community



RMF's Marisol and Dr. Luis (center) at the OTC outreach in the San Carlos community



Patients benefiting from the OTC outreach in the San Carlos community



One of the children's OTC medicine and multivitamin kits for the outreach

Weeks 3 & 4: April 16–29, 2018

During the third and fourth weeks of April 2018, RMF Puerto Rico provided community members with 1,068 free hygiene products, over 614 multivitamins and 203 OTC medicines, and 12 medical supplies:

- 232 hygiene products, 10 OTC medications, and 74 multivitamins were distributed in the Espinosa Community of Vega Alta, April 17 & April 24, 2018.
- 2 dextrose bags and 4 transport tapes were distributed at the Angelorum Clinic, April 18, 2018.
- 252 hygiene products and 104 multivitamins were distributed at Jardines de Dorado, April 20, 2018.
- 184 hygiene products, 8 OTC medicines, and 43 multivitamins were distributed in the Arenales II community of Dorado, April 25, 2018.
- 846 families received about 400 hygiene products, 393 multivitamins, 185 OTC medicines, and 6 medical supplies at the Emergency Medical Center CDT in Bajura, Vega Alta during the month of April 2018.

The first and third outreaches were carried out by RMF team member Marisol Espinosa, while the second outreach was delivered by Elgin Cepeda (Vega Alta Clinic volunteer), the fourth outreach was implemented by RMF Puerto Rico team members, including Dr. Emilio Rivera, Dr. Luis Gonzalez Bermudez, and Marisol Espinosa. The last outreach was carried out by Vega Alta Clinic volunteers and RMF team members Juan Carlos Heredia, Dr. Luis Gonzalez Bermudez, and Dr. Emilio Rivera.

Espinosa Community

On April 17 and April 24, we held outreaches in the Espinosa community of Dorado, located in northern Puerto Rico. Residents live with few economic resources and still do not have electricity or drinking water seven months after Hurricane Maria. We were able to provide over-the-counter (OTC) vitamins, medications, and hygiene products to over 55 families in this community.



Young and old community members benefiting from the OTC outreach



Espinosa Community OTC outreach and registration

Angelorum Medical Aesthetics Pain Clinic

On April 18, 2018, we provided the Angelorum Medical Aesthetics Pain Clinic in Dorado with 2 bags of dextrose and 4 transport tapes. The clinic works to improve patients' quality of life by addressing physical, mental, and spiritual needs, uniting traditional and alternative medicine to uphold fair treatment and humane values.



Patient receiving intravenous solution



2 bags of dextrose to support Angelorum

Jardines de Dorado Community

On April 20, 2018, we held an outreach in the Jardines de Dorado community, located in northern Puerto Rico. Residents live with insufficient economic resources and still do not have electricity or drinking water seven months after Hurricane Maria. We were able to provide over-the-counter (OTC) vitamins and hygiene products to over 60 families in this community.



Elderly beneficiaries of the health outreach in the Jardines de Dorado community



OTC outreach registration in the Jardines de Dorado community

Arenales II Community

On April 25, 2018, we held an outreach in the Arenales II community of Dorado, located in northern Puerto Rico, where residents live with insufficient economic resources and still do not have electricity or drinking water seven months after Hurricane Maria. We were able to provide over-the-counter (OTC) vitamins and hygiene products to over 65 families in this community.



RMF team member Marisol (second to right) registering beneficiaries at Arenales II



RMF's Dr. Luis and Dr. Emilio (right) at the OTC outreach at Arenales II

Emergency Medical Center CDT

Throughout the month of April 2018, we held outreaches at the Emergency Medical Center CDT in Bajura, Vega Alta, which is located in northern Puerto Rico. Residents live with few economic resources and still do not have electricity or drinking water seven months after Hurricane Maria. We were able to provide over-the-counter (OTC) medications and vitamins to 846 families in this community.



Emergency Medical Center CDT outreach in Vega Alta



RMF team member Dr. Luis at the Emergency Medical Center CDT outreach in Vega Alta



Volunteer organization at an Emergency Medical Center CDT outreach in Vega Alta



Dr. Jorge Cedeño (volunteer medical doctor) participating in the Emergency Medical Center CDT outreach in Vega Alta



Volunteer RN Jeannette Crespo at the Emergency Medical Center CDT outreach in Vega Alta

