

Haiti/Dominican Republic Border Activities

Along the Haiti/Dominican Republic border, progress has been made, but the situation remains fragile as the cholera epidemic threatens a population vulnerable to disease outbreak. PAHO/WHO has worked in the area to strengthen health services, support training and nutrition, and build water and sanitation capacity since the earthquake. The situation of acute poverty, large incidence of communicable diseases, malnutrition and lack of basic services prevailing in the border towns before the disaster was exacerbated by the presence of displaced persons who increased demand for such services including health care.

Since July, the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), in its elimination efforts of measles, rubella and polio, concluded catching up exercises in seven of nine provinces along the extended border, as well as rapid verification

monitoring through home visits. This provided coverage to 95% or more in those provinces. All border provinces have received two or more visits from the EPI consultants and have received training in the use of new indicators for monitoring the immunization management processes such as dropout rate, access rate, minimum coverage and booster coverage.

New documents concerning micro planning and cold chain were designed as well as a proposal for a Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) study on immunization. A social communication specialist has been working on an Information, Communication and Education plan for immunization. A plan for doctors, nurses, nutritionists, dietitians and administrative personal in the use of those norms has been developed and implemented, as well as a new protocol for the management of malnourished children.

Nine national facilitators received training in the organization of hospital food and nutrition services. They in turn, trained 150 persons in nine hospitals in the five border provinces. The situational analysis of those services was

completed as well as a survey on the nutritional status of newborns in those same nine and in one regional hospital.

Finally, PAHO/WHO is improving water and sanitation and bio-safety conditions in the selected hospitals in order to strengthen infection prevention. Twenty hospitals at the border are involved: three regional, seven provincial (level 2) hospitals and 10 municipal (level 3) hospitals. Of those 20, thirteen have received the following interventions:

- Improvement of water supply with the objective to have a 24 hour non-stop supply through the installation of equipment such as water tanks, water pumps, change in tubing, among others. These hospitals did not have continuous water supply before the intervention.
- Improvement of water quality through water chlorination and the implementation of a surveillance system of water quality.
- Survey with recommendations to improve onsite sewage treatment/disposal.
- Improvements in the management of hospital waste with waste segregation (infectious and common waste), internal transportation routes and outside storage.



Availability of Drugs and Medical Supplies

The PROMESS medical warehouse, established in 1992 to ensure access to quality medicines and supplies, has played a vital role in the earthquake response. Overseen by a management committee led by the Haitian Minister of Health and managed by PAHO/WHO, PROMESS has served as the main storage and distribution center for medicines and supplies that were already in-country as well as those donated as part of the relief effort. In the aftermath of the earthquake, PROMESS made drugs and medical supplies available to all public health facilities and national and international NGOs that were providing free health services to the affected population.

Several days after the earthquake, the U.S. Army offered to support PROMESS in the distribution of drugs and supplies. The collaboration revolved around three areas:

- The U.S. Army provided 25 medical logisticians and pharmacists who, for several weeks, worked throughout the night to update the inventory of PROMESS.
- Through USAID, PROMESS received help to organize more effectively the supply chain management of medical items to be able to address the growing requests for drugs and supplies with the speed that the emergency required.
- U.S. forces also provided engineering support to clear the rubble around the PROMESS facilities to create space for storage of containers. In addition, they provided 24/7 security for the premises for over a month, until new walls could be erected.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, PROMESS saw an average of 30-32 clients per day, such as public hospitals and international and local NGOs. During the first 45 days, PROMESS distributed more than 345,000 boxes of essential medicines and supplies, including antibiotics; vaccines; drugs for mental health conditions; drugs for treatment of TB, diabetes and malaria; and anesthetics.

In early April, MSPP extended free access to medicines until 12 July 2010. Currently, PROMESS continues to partner with MSPP for the distribution of health packages to all mobile clinics, public hospitals and NGOs. The following packages are being distributed to meet the health needs of the Haitian population:

1. **Basic Units** – Contains 24 boxes of supplies, which are packaged with medicines, IV fluids, renewable supplies, medical instruments, and clinical guidelines/diagnostics and treatment manuals. The Units can care for 1,000 people for three months.



2. **Supplementary Units** – Contains medical devices, essential medicines and equipment for a population of 10,000 for a period of three months.
3. **PROMESS Kit** – Contains donated supplies tailored to meet the needs of displaced populations. This kit is assembled by PROMESS in the Port-au-Prince warehouse.
4. **Mobile Clinic Kits** – Contains one Basic Unit and one PROMESS Kit.
5. **Emergency Health Kits** – Contains 10 basic Units and one supplementary Unit.
6. **Reproductive Health Kits** – Contains condoms, obstetric supplies, and Sexually Transmitted Infection supplies.

In March, 100 mobile clinic kits were distributed in all

priority areas. By the summer, all hospitals had received Basic Units required to meet the population demand.

In late October, PROMESS was the leader in the provision of medicines and supplies to address the emergency cholera outbreak. Several large scale medical supply drops have been organized through PROMESS. For example, between November 19 and November 22, PAHO/WHO, in coordination with the MSPP and WFP, distributed 87 tons of essential medicines and supplies. This operation, which included all departments (with the exception of West), replenished medicines in areas already affected and prepositioned supplies for treatment of roughly 30% of the potential caseload over the coming months. For the West Department, medical supplies were distributed to 23 hospitals and health centers in metropolitan Port-au-Prince. Since November, over 100 tons of new medical supplies for cholera response have been distributed to all 10 Departments through PROMESS, WFP and MSPP.