

American Red Cross Announces Expanded Haiti Health, Shelter and Financial Assistance Initiatives



**American
Red Cross**

WASHINGTON, Thursday, July 8, 2010 — The American Red Cross today announced a series of new or expanded initiatives that will help keep open the largest general hospital in Haiti, help build more

semi-permanent shelters for 40,000 people now living in tents and tarps, and provide financial assistance to tens of thousands of earthquake survivors through an innovative text messaging program.

The announcements were made during a Red Cross briefing on the upcoming six-month anniversary of the devastating January 12 earthquake in Haiti.



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“Six months after the earthquake, Haiti is filled with signs of hope and progress as well as reminders of the immense needs that still remain,” said Gail McGovern, president and CEO of the American Red Cross, who has been to Haiti three times since the earthquake. “The Red Cross has improved the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of Haitians with emergency shelter, food, water, medical treatment, latrines and other supplies – and we are also investing in other recovery projects such as building shelters and improving water and sanitation systems.”

The new or expanded American Red Cross initiatives include:

Health

\$7.9 million for health programs, including a \$3.8 million agreement with Partners in Health to pay salaries of more than 1,800 Haitian doctors, nurses and other staff at the largest general hospital in Port-au-Prince. All of these hospital employees had been working without pay since even before the earthquake, and American Red Cross funding will cover their lost wages and enable to hospital to continue to provide critically needed health care.

\$1.4 million in prosthetics and rehabilitation support to injured Haitians through a partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

\$900,000 on health programs in camps to educate Haitians about hygiene and HIV to prevent outbreaks of disease.

Shelter

\$8.6 million on new shelter efforts in Haiti, with this money focused on building semi-permanent shelters for people now living in tarps and tents in Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas.

In coming weeks we expect to sign agreements worth more than \$21 million to build more semi-permanent shelters to house about 40,000 people.

Construction on 300 temporary shelters, enough for 1,500 people, has begun in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Cite Soleil in what will be the first large-scale shelter project in the capital by a single organization.

Financial Assistance

\$9.7 million for a series of new or expanded programs that provide financial assistance to Haitians, including a \$6.1 million cash-for-work program with Mercy Corps to support families outside Port-au-Prince who are hosting homeless Haitians and a \$3.6 million expansion of a cash grant and loan program with Fonkoze, Haiti's largest microfinance institution.

Innovative Text (SMS) Cash Transfer Program

In addition, the Red Cross said today that it is launching a major \$50 million SMS cash transfer program to give cash grants of approximately \$125 to up to 400,000 Haitian families over the next several months. Recently, the American Red Cross tested a technologically innovative program to give cash grants to families using cell phones and text messaging. During this successful pilot, smaller \$50 cash grants were given out to help nearly 1,800 families move from at-risk camps to camps in safer areas. This newly expanded program will enable families to buy food and supplies, fund the education of their children, purchase medicine, repair homes, relocate from camps, and invest in their businesses and livelihoods.

"Through these programs, families who once stood in line for relief distributions will now be empowered to buy some of the basic items they need most, which in turn should help stimulate the country's economy," McGovern said, noting that even modest amounts of money can make a big difference to Haitian families, as 70 percent of Haitians lived on less than \$2 a day prior to the earthquake.

"The same cell phone technology that enabled Americans to text donations for Haiti will now enable earthquake survivors to access money to support their families," said McGovern.

Hurricane Preparedness

With hurricane season already underway, the Red Cross is working on disaster preparedness programs for vulnerable people currently living under tarps or tents. This includes programs that will train 500,000 camp residents on emergency first aid, safe evacuation procedures and early warning systems, as well as funding efforts to dig ditches and put sandbags on steep hillsides to reduce flooding. In addition, the Red Cross is pre-positioning emergency supplies such as tarps, tents and blankets for 125,000 people in 10 cities around Haiti and in a regional warehouse in Panama.

Money Raised and Spent

The American Red Cross has raised approximately \$468 million for the Haiti relief and recovery efforts, spending nearly a third of the money - \$148.5million – in the first six months. About 38% of the money has been spent on food and emergency services; about 35% on emergency and transitional/semi-permanent shelters; 10% on livelihoods

and host family assistance; 8% on health and disease prevention programs; 5% on disaster preparedness activities as well as 4% on providing clean water and sanitation. The shelter and financial assistance agreements to be signed in the next several weeks will add another \$71 million in spending.

The American Red Cross is on track to meet its goal of spending more than \$200 million to address immediate needs – mostly in the first 12 months after the earthquake. The remainder of the funds raised will go to longer-term recovery over the next three to five years, with spending plans likely to evolve to respond to changing needs.

“We know that the crisis in Haiti is not over and the recovery process will be long and difficult,” McGovern said. “Haiti and its people must rebuild their homes, economy, health systems, schools and transportation networks. With an estimated \$12 billion needed to rebuild Haiti, the needs are beyond the capacity of the Red Cross alone to fix, and will require the collective efforts of governments and humanitarian groups around the world.”

“The American Red Cross will support earthquake survivors in the months and years to come, and will be in Haiti until the last donated dollar is spent,” she added.

To give to the American Red Cross now, go to www.redcross.org and click on DONATE NOW. Save a copy of your donation receipt to apply to your agencies Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign 2010. There are multiple Red Cross chapters in Virginia that need your gifts year-round for local and international disasters. Red Cross chapters participating in the 2010 campaign are shown below.

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