

Hurricane Dorian Six-month Report



THE STORM

Hurricane Dorian slammed into Great Abaco, Bahamas, on Sept. 1, 2019, as a

Category 5 storm, the second most-powerful Atlantic hurricane storm on record. When Dorian moved over Grand Bahama, it lashed the island with powerful winds and heavy rain for more than 40 hours. In the storm's wake, 70,000 people were displaced, and an estimated 13,000 homes were damaged or destroyed as were the majority of health facilities on Great Abaco.

In advance of the storm, Americares positioned emergency responders in Florida, and the team quickly moved to the Bahamian capital, Nassau, to make assessments and coordinate response activities. The team set goals to help meet the physical and mental health needs of survivors and restore health services in the communities most affected by the storm.

Six months later, Americares health programs for survivors continue.



Emergency responder Eric Perez assessed damage in the hardest-hit communities.

Americares
Health
Programs
Continue

“With transportation disrupted, patients cannot get to health centers. Americares is operating mobile clinics in schools, churches—even on the ferry dock—to ensure survivors get health care.”

—Cora Nally, Americares Hurricane Dorian Bahamas team leader

Working alongside Ministry of Health staff, Americares also helped survivors with daily blood glucose monitoring and insulin, welfare check-ins, prescription refills, health education and support for daily living. Americares also provided a refrigerator and shelving for proper storage of medicine in the shelter, which was in a gymnasium.

Care in communities: In late October, a second Americares medical team began providing health services at an existing clinic in Elbow Cay; the team also brought health services to Man-O-War Cay and Marsh Harbour. In February, Americares moved its base to Abaco, and began providing mobile health services to five more communities in the archipelago.

For Hurricane Dorian survivors

4,200

medical consultations

2,500

mental health consultations

100+

health workers trained

\$2.7 million

in medicine and relief supplies

Care for survivors in shelters:

Less than a week after the storm, an Americares medical team helped provide health screenings for evacuees from the hardest hit islands as they arrived at the airport in Nassau to seek shelter in government facilities or with friends and family. On September 11, 2019, Americares emergency medical team began providing health and mental health and psychosocial consultations in Nassau at the Kendal G.L. Isaacs Gymnasium, the country's largest emergency shelter.



On devastated Abaco Island, hurricane survivor Renaud receives care for high blood pressure from Americares emergency medical team.



Photo by Jemps Civil

To reach the most devastated—and remote—communities, AmeriCares emergency medical teams bring medical supplies by boat.

Mental health care: At the shelter in Nassau, AmeriCares partnered with the United Nations Population Fund to rebuild and foster community networks and support systems by training and supporting community health volunteers. The volunteers distributed 62 personal care kits to female shelter residents and shared information on sexual health and well-being to male and female shelter residents.

In partnership with UNFPA and IsraAid, AmeriCares also installed a community space at the shelter so survivors had a place for art and games, and mental health specialists had a space for group therapy activities, one-on-one meetings and community events.

Training to expand mental health services: In November, AmeriCares trained 77 mental health professionals who work for the Ministry of Health and the Bahamas Psychological Association on mental health and psychosocial services in emergencies; some also received education on resiliency, coping and self-care and instruction on how to share their knowledge with other mental health professionals.

Training to support survivors: In Hope Town, one of the most affected communities in the Abaco islands, AmeriCares trained community health volunteers to be a critical link between clinical providers and the community, increasing access to care for many more of the most vulnerable survivors. In just two months, five trained health volunteers in Elbow Cay spoke with 777 people, sent survivors 1,507 health-related text messages and accompanied 79 patients to the health clinic.

By June 2020, AmeriCares will train 30 additional community health volunteers to promote health services and facilitate health education sessions and refer survivors to health or social services, if needed.

Rebuilding health centers: After the Hope Town clinic on Abaco was destroyed during the hurricane, Ministry of Health staff established a temporary clinic in a nearby damaged home. AmeriCares rehabilitated this space and, in mid-2020, plans to provide the ministry with a solar-powered temporary health facility so survivors in communities across the Abaco Islands can access the care they need.

“ I’ve talked with multiple people who were evacuated and had to leave their deceased loved ones behind. I’ve seen them come out of a state of being unable to talk, to starting to tell me their story and end up crying in my arms as they recounted just a little bit about what happened to them. ”

— Lisa LaDue,
AmeriCares mental health and psychosocial program manager



Photo by Jemps Civil



Photo by Alexandra Ostasiewicz

After the storm, AmeriCares kept Hope Town Clinic operating (top), and provided medical screenings to survivors like this mom and son.