March 4, 2020

Emergency Response Update

The number of coronavirus/COVID-19 cases continues to increase with 92,138 confirmed cases across more than 75 countries and territories. Community transmission has been noted in several countries including Iran, Italy, South Korea and the United States. The cases in Washington state have raised alarms in the US given the vulnerable populations affected as well as current limitations with diagnostic testing. As diagnostic testing improves here in the US, we expect a significant spike in cases, not due to a change in transmission, but due to more accurate detection.

Currently, Americares response to the coronavirus is centered around the most critical role Americares can play—ensuring that Americares community and clinical health staff as well as healthcare workers in our partner health center facilities are prepared for the continued spread of COVID-19. Our goal is to ensure that we and our partners can continue to do lifesaving and lifechanging work on behalf of those affected by poverty and disaster.

This aligns with Americares core strategy: to build the capacity of local health centers and health workers to ensure under-resourced, at-risk communities have access to critical health services and resources. With this support and preparation, frontline health workers can remain safe and able to improve health outcomes for their communities.

Americares multi-faceted response to COVID-19 is focused on the following interventions:

**Health education and preparedness capacity building for health workers**

- Americares is producing coronavirus-specific health education materials for health center partners as well as Americares own clinical staff and field offices to promote readiness and build the capacity of health facilities to respond effectively and improve community health outcomes.
- Over the past several weeks, Americares has also been educating our frontline health workers and partner organizations in several of the communities where we have ongoing programming on how to prevent and detect coronavirus. Examples include:
  - In Mumbai, India, through our Mobile Health Center Program, which reaches people in 131 poor urban communities each month, Americares community health workers are delivering lessons to patients on the facts and strategies for coronavirus and general infection prevention and control.
  - In Puerto Rico, Americares recently conducted community health programming, which included health education on coronavirus, as part of our earthquake emergency response.
  - In the Philippines, as part of the Taal Volcano emergency response, Americares conducted community outreach health programming, which included Water, Sanitation and Hygiene training and health education on coronavirus.

**Sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect health workers most at risk**

- We are leveraging existing stock of PPE and working to source additional product for domestic and international partners to support preparedness and response efforts.
• Americares has delivered N95 and examination masks to our Philippines office—Americares emergency response hub in Asia—to ensure they have the critical equipment necessary to reduce risk and decrease the spread of infection.

• We are also supplying PPE to Americares clinics and community health programs in Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Colombia, and Connecticut to support the safety of clinical staff in managing suspect COVID-19 cases.

Working closely with our international offices to prepare should we need to launch simultaneous responses in multiple countries

• To support the response effort, Americares is hiring an infection, prevention and control (IPC) expert to supplement existing Americares expertise and focus specifically on Americares COVID-19 response.

• The IPC expert will aggregate resources and information and help ensure Americares global response remains adaptive to the fluid circumstances.

Preparing to mobilize medical personnel to provide surge support for overwhelmed health facilities, if needed

• Mobilizing medical personnel to reinforce existing health systems when compromised is a key pillar of Americares emergency response program.

• Most recently, we deployed Emergency Medical Teams to the Bahamas to provide primary and mental health services to Hurricane Dorian survivors.

• Members of Americares global roster of emergency response experts stand ready to deploy again as needed.

As previously noted, Americares has considerable experience responding to disease outbreaks including robust responses to Ebola, dengue, measles and Zika outbreaks in recent years. Moreover, Americares on-going health programming in expertise areas such as infection prevention and control; health worker safety; disaster preparedness and risk reduction; health center capacity building; and access to medicine helps many of our local health center partners respond to emergencies such as epidemics and ensures vulnerable, low-income communities here in the U.S. and around the world have the resources and access to care they need to maintain health and reduce risk.

Thank you for your partnership and support. We will continue to keep you updated on our COVID-19 response and other on-going emergencies below.

Tennessee, Tornadoes

• Several tornadoes touched down in Tennessee Monday night, killing at least 24 people and destroying at least 40 buildings in Nashville’s commercial district.

• Americares is in touch with health center partners in the affected area with offers of aid.

• Damage assessments are still underway as severe rain continues to fall so the full extent of needs is still unclear.
Puerto Rico, Earthquakes

- Over 4,100 earthquakes and aftershocks have struck Puerto Rico since January 1, 2020
- In just the last week, 43 earthquakes classified as “significant” have struck Puerto Rico focused mainly in southern areas.
- To date, Americares has supported 2,413 individuals with mental health support services and preparedness skill building.
- Americares is committed to continuing mental health support services to the affected populations through the end of March.
- Along with expert medical and mental health services, Americares has provided 32 shipments of insulin, medicines, medical supplies, and relief items to address survivors’ needs.

Southern US, Flooding

- Historic flooding in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Alabama damaged over 1,000 homes over the last few weeks in southern US.
- States of Emergency were declared in the states of Mississippi and Alabama with flood watches declared in many others.
- Search and rescue missions were necessary for some of those affected in central Mississippi.
- In response, Americares sent hygiene kits and other relief items to help those affected in Mississippi and is exploring additional shipments of aid.