



CHOLERA

The Challenge

On October 21, 2010, in the aftermath of the devastating January 2010 earthquake, the Haitian Ministry of Health and Population confirmed cases of cholera for the first time in at least a century. As the U.S. Government was already on the ground helping Haiti build sustainable health systems to detect and combat the spread of communicable diseases, the U.S. Government was in a position to quickly respond to the Government of Haiti's urgent need for support. At the request of the Government of Haiti, the U.S. Government immediately began working with the Haitian Ministry of Health, the National Directorate for Potable Water and Sanitation (DINEPA), and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to lessen the severity of the outbreak.

As of June 2, 2013, Haiti has reported an estimated 658,563 cases of cholera and an estimated 8,111 deaths. Though deaths from cholera were high in the first few months of the epidemic, Haitian-led, internationally supported efforts have helped to significantly reduce the case fatality rate to below the international standard of 1 percent.

Accomplishments

The U.S. Government through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), provided expertise and more than \$95 million during the emergency phase of the cholera response by:

- Supporting cholera prevention and treatment efforts through social marketing and distribution of products to purify drinking water, oral rehydration salts, which prevent dehydration in patients with acute, watery diarrhea, and soap for washing hands and household items.
- Working side-by-side with the Ministry of Health and other partners to establish a national system for tracking cases of cholera.
- Supporting treatment for cholera and other diarrheal diseases at 164 public and non-governmental organization health facilities throughout the country.
- Providing technical assistance and support to DINEPA to improve workforce capacity in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).
- Developing and implementing training for 264 Potable Water Technicians for the Communes who are deployed to all 133 rural communes outside of Port-au-Prince to support community water system operation.



- Developing cholera education materials to train more than 6,000 community health workers who were funded to conduct educational activities and outreach on cholera prevention and treatment in communities throughout Haiti.
- Improving access to clean water in communities by providing support to drill new wells, repair others, and promote safe household water practices.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of large-scale distributions of hygiene items in collaboration with DINEPA and the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Challenges Ahead

Access to clean water and availability of sanitation systems are limited in Haiti and cholera is likely to persist until access to adequate water and sanitation improves. The U.S. Government is committed to strengthening the Haitian healthcare system to contain future outbreaks and treat the Haitian people. In line with the Ministry of Health's desire to integrate cholera prevention and treatment into overall health programming, the U.S. Government is working more broadly on the prevention and treatment of all causes of diarrheal diseases. To reduce vulnerability to cholera and other diarrheal diseases, the U.S. Government is providing the Government of Haiti and other partners with support to improve access to treated drinking water at the community and household levels in urban and rural communities. In addition, the U.S. Government, in collaboration with PAHO, UNICEF, and the Governments of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, helped launch the Coalition for the Elimination of Cholera on the island of Hispaniola, which aims to coordinate and leverage water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) efforts that contribute to the elimination of cholera in Hispaniola. Additionally, the U.S. Government is participating in the coalition's donor mapping exercise that aims to track the commitments, geographic sites, and lines of action supported by donors and determine their alignment with the Government of Haiti's plan of action on cholera.