



Health in Haiti and the U.S. Government Involvement

February 2010

On January 12, 2010, a major earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale struck Haiti devastating the Caribbean island,¹ where 80 percent of its 9 million residents live in poverty and more than half (54%) live on less than \$1 a day.² The Government of Haiti (GoH) estimates that more than 200,000 people have been killed, with the greatest destruction by far occurring in the high-density capital city of Port-au-Prince, where thousands have been killed or injured and rendered homeless.³ Due to the powerful quake, hospitals collapsed, shantytown dwellings were leveled, electricity and running water were cut off, and much of the city's infrastructure was destroyed. It is estimated that more than 3 million people are in need of humanitarian relief, including health care, food assistance, and access to water and sanitation.⁴

Historically, Haiti has faced repeated crises and setbacks due to political conflict, weak governing institutions, deep poverty, food insecurity, environmental degradation, HIV/AIDS, and other challenges. This fact sheet provides a pre-earthquake snapshot of Haiti's health status and an overview of the active U.S. government global health programs in Haiti. It also offers a summary of the U.S. response to the earthquake to date.



A Snapshot of Health in Haiti

Haiti has some of the poorest health statistics in the Americas. It is estimated that:²

- Infant and maternal mortality rank highest in the region, at 59.69 per 1,000 live births and 670 per 100,000 live births, respectively;
- More than half (58%) of the population is undernourished and child malnutrition exceeds 18 percent. In addition just over half (58%) of the population has access to safe water while only 19 percent of the population has access to sanitation.
- Haiti is a malaria-endemic country; in 2006, there were an estimated 164,590 malaria cases and 741 malaria deaths;
- The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Haiti is the worst in the Caribbean, with an estimated 120,000 people living with HIV/AIDS, and an adult prevalence rate of 2.2 percent, constituting a "generalized epidemic";
- Tuberculosis incidence in Haiti is also the highest in the Americas – 306 per 100,000 population – and one of the country's leading causes

of morbidity and mortality; among those infected with HIV, the TB prevalence rate is 35 per 100,000 population; after HIV/AIDS, TB is the country's greatest infectious cause of mortality in both youth and adults;

- Lack of health infrastructure contributes to poor health status in the country. A large majority of Haitians, particularly in rural areas, lack access to basic health services. Haiti's health workforce is weak with just three physicians, one nurse/midwife and 13 hospital beds per 10,000 people, compared to global averages of 13 physicians, 28 nurses/midwives, and 25 hospital beds per 10,000 people.²

Key Demographic, Health, & Economic Indicators²

	Haiti	Global
Population	9 million	6.8 billion
Port-au-Prince	2 million	—
Population Density (people per sq. kilometer)	333	50
Population Below Poverty	80%	—
Population Under Age 15	38%	27%
GDP Per Capita	\$1,300	\$10,400
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	59.7	40.9
Percent Undernourished	58%	—
Percent w/ Access to Water	58%	86%
Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 live births)	670	400
HIV/AIDS prevalence rate	2.2%	0.8%
TB case rate (per 100,000)	306	139
Malaria	Endemic	—

Major U.S. Government Global Health & Development Programs in Haiti

The U.S. government has had a presence in Haiti long before the earthquake struck disaster in January 2010:

- **Pwoje Djanm:** The USG provides development assistance to the health sector in Haiti through a program called "Santé pour le Développement et la Stabilité d'Haïti (SDSH) – Yon Pwoje Djanm," or Pwoje Djanm. A large majority of the U.S. maternal and child health, family planning, TB, and water and sanitation development assistance is integrated into Pwoje Djanm, which has received \$51.4 million from the U.S. government to improve basic health care delivery and services in Haiti.⁵
- **President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)^{6,7:}** PEPFAR provides funding for HIV/AIDS bilaterally to more than 80 countries, but largely targets 15 focus countries, including Haiti. The U.S. government, through PEPFAR, supports the country's national AIDS strategy by expanding upon existing clinic and community-based resources, building community networks to link people living with HIV to services and treatment, training health workers to provide prenatal, gynecological and maternity care to prevent mother-to-child transmission, and scaling up lab and diagnostic capacities. As of June 2009, PEPFAR provided \$105.5 million to support HIV/AIDS programs in Haiti.

- **USAID Tuberculosis (TB) Program**⁸: The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is the leading bilateral donor in the world for TB and supports the expansion of TB control in 38 countries, including Haiti. Although not a High-Burden TB country, Haiti receives funding and assistance from USAID as a “Tier II” priority country. In FY 2008, USAID provided \$1.3 million to Haiti for TB activities, including developing and expanding diagnostic and treatment capacity, integrating TB and HIV services, and strengthening TB program leadership, management, and technical ability.
- **The U.S. Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Initiative**^{9,10}: NTDs have low mortality but high morbidity rates, and often result in severe disability, disfigurement, blindness, and malnutrition. Lack of access to clean water, health services, adequate housing, and good sanitation contribute to their prevalence and impact. The NTD Initiative began supporting NTD control in Haiti in 2008 to help scale up and integrate mass drug administration for lymphatic filariasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis, two of the seven most common NTDs worldwide.
- **USAID Family Planning Program**¹¹: USAID supports family planning programs in more than 50 countries worldwide, including Haiti, one of 13 “first tier intensive focus” countries that have the greatest unmet need, high-risk births, poor contraceptive use, and population pressures on land and water resources. Key activities in the country include enhancing access to and supply of contraceptives and other essential supplies, improving pre-natal and post-natal care, and managing complications during pregnancy.
- **USAID Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program**^{12,13}: USAID MCH programs are active in 74 countries, promoting long-term development investments as well as short-term, emergency needs, and Haiti is one of 30 MCH “priority countries”. Supported activities include family planning, prenatal and postpartum care, assisted deliveries, treatment of diarrheal diseases in children, nutrition counseling, and education.
- **U.S. Food Aid Program**^{14,15}: USAID sponsors food aid and nutrition activities in more than 50 countries worldwide. With malnutrition as a leading cause of mortality and more than half of its population undernourished, Haiti receives both emergency and non-emergency food aid through P.L. 480 Title II. In FY 2008, U.S. food aid totaled \$79.6 million – \$45.3 million in emergency food aid and \$34.2 million in non-emergency food aid – to Haiti. Other USAID nutrition activities in Haiti include school feeding programs, targeted supplementation to vulnerable groups and food fortification, comprehensive maternal, infant, and young child nutrition programs, and nutritional care and support for people living with HIV.
- **Water for Poor Initiative**¹⁶: The Water for Poor Act created the Initiative to increase access to, and effective use of safe drinking water and sanitation to improve human health in 36 priority water countries, including Haiti. U.S. activities include increasing access to potable water, rehabilitating the existing water and sanitation infrastructure, and distributing point-of-use water treatment in communities and villages across Haiti.

U.S. Government Response to the Quake

Soon after the 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck, the international community, led by the U.S., responded with humanitarian aid, donations, and rescue and medical teams. As of February 23, 2010, the U.S. government has contributed an estimated \$687.9 million in humanitarian assistance to Haiti for the earthquake. Key activities have included:^{17,18}

- Coordinating relief efforts with the United Nations and the international community, including more than 30 countries and hundreds of NGOs;
- Providing medical relief comprised of nearly 1,000 hospital beds and 11 operating rooms on the USNS Comfort, five Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMATs) from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that include another 35 staff members and 40 beds that function as a field emergency room, and one International Medical Surgical Team (IMSuRT) with 50 staff members and 35 beds and performs disaster surgery; More than 30,000 patients have been treated to date;

- Assessing urgent public health needs, through Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) participation on Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA) teams collecting health, food, water, nutrition, and sanitation data from 224 sites across Haiti;
- Managing the Port-au-Prince airport by the U.S. Air Force, allowing 160 missions to fly to Haiti providing approximately 2,500 U.S. military and relief personnel and more than 2,600 tons of relief supplies;
- Evacuating an estimated 10,500 people from Haiti, 8,300 of which were American citizens;
- Delivering hundreds of thousands of meals/humanitarian rations, bottled water, and water tanks to earthquake survivors; To date, USAID through the P.L. 480 Food for Peace program has contributed \$68 million in emergency food assistance to affected areas.

Future Challenges

The international community, including the U.S. government, has mobilized a large scale global response to the earthquake in Haiti. However, in addition to causing a significant loss of life and displacement, the earthquake has exacerbated already difficult health and infrastructure conditions in the country, challenging relief and rebuilding efforts. Particular issues include:

- A severe shortage of hospitals and health care workers;
- Poor access to clean water and sanitation, which may increase susceptibility to water-borne illnesses and diarrhea, one of Haiti’s leading causes of mortality;
- Overcrowded resettlements of displaced populations, increasing the risk for communicable diseases such as measles, meningitis, and acute respiratory infections;
- An increased risk of malaria, dengue, and TB as access to bed nets and treatments is disrupted; electricity outages are impacting the cold chain supply for vaccinations;
- Rise in HIV incidence due to lack of access to antiretrovirals for patients living with HIV and to prevent mother-to-child-transmission;
- Heightened risk of severe malnutrition.

Ongoing efforts to address the earthquake in Haiti by the U.S. government can be monitored here: <http://www.usaid.gov/helphaiti/>.

¹ U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Earthquakes Hazard Program website: <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eqinthenews/2010/us2010rja6/>.

² Kaiser Family Foundation, www.globalhealthfacts.org.

³ Center for Information of the Government of Haiti, website: <http://www.haitiseisme2010.gouv.ht/>

⁴ World Food Programme, “Haiti: 10 Hunger Facts”; January 2010.

⁵ USAID. “Haiti: United States Government Assistance to the Health Sector”; http://www.usaid.gov/ht/docs/iip/sdsh_fact_sheet.pdf.

⁶ For more information on PEPFAR, see the PEPFAR Fact Sheet: <http://www.kff.org/globalhealth/upload/8002.pdf>.

⁷ PEPFAR. FY 2008 Country Profile, Haiti: <http://www.pepfar.gov/press/countries/profiles/116223.htm>.

⁸ USAID. Infectious Diseases, Tuberculosis, Haiti: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/id/tuberculosis/countries/lac/haiti_profile.html.

⁹ For more information on NTDs, see the NTD Fact Sheet: <http://www.kff.org/globalhealth/upload/7938.pdf>.

¹⁰ President’s Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Initiative. “Neglected Tropical Diseases in Haiti”, http://www.neglecteddiseases.gov/countries/country_profiles/haiti.html.

¹¹ USAID. Family Planning: Countries. http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/pop/countries/index.html.

¹² USAID. Countries: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/mch/countries/index.html.

¹³ For more information on MCH, see the U.S. and MCH Fact Sheet: <http://www.kff.org/globalhealth/upload/7963.pdf>.

¹⁴ Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Congressional Budget Justification FY2010: Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, and the Department of State Congressional Budget Justification FY2010.

¹⁵ USAID. Nutrition: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/nut/index.html.

¹⁶ Water for Poor: <http://www.state.gov/g/oes/water/index.htm>.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “HHS Emergency Response in Haiti: Summary Report, Feb. 19,” <http://www.hhs.gov/haiti/summaryrept02192010.html>.

¹⁸ USAID. “USAID Responds to Haiti Earthquake”: <http://www.usaid.gov/helphaiti/>.