



Medical Teams International Partner's Urgently Fighting Covid-19 in Guatemala

A HEALTH SYSTEM NEAR COLLAPSE. RAMPANT POVERTY IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS. LACK OF BASIC HYGEINE AND SANITATION IN CROWDED COMMUNITIES.

In Guatemala, without swift intervention and innovative partnerships, there exists a perfect storm of conditions to fuel the rapid spread of COVID-19.

Thanks in large part to generous partners like **Becton, Dickinson, and Company** who have responded with urgency and compassion, Medical Teams International has been able to mount a significant COVID-19 prevention and treatment response in Guatemala, the most populous country in Central America.

Medical Teams' work is in collaboration with and in support of the government's response. To prevent a total collapse of the health system in Guatemala City, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance has asked Medical Teams

to help respond to the crisis. (There are currently no other international NGOs responding to COVID-19 in the city.) Medical Teams has been supporting the Guatemala Ministry of Health's COVID-19 response since March with training and supplies in the communities it serves.

A shipment of essential health supplies including those from **Becton, Dickinson, and Company**, arrived in Guatemala City this spring to help equip a 3,000-bed hospital. The shipment was delivered to the Guatemalan Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance and unpacked at a special event attended by Guatemalan President Giammattei.

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"Each one of us should do our part implementing the protective actions," said Walter Lopez, Program Manager, Medical Teams Guatemala. "Our comprehensive response is possible only through the generosity of our partners."

Medical Teams' primary partner in Guatemala is **Providence Saint Joseph Health**, which

supports implementation of the Chicamán Maternal and Child Program in 12 rural communities. The program contributes to improving the health status of mothers and children under two years by reducing the incidence of diarrhea, pneumonia, and underweight children, and improving access to quality maternal health services.

In response to COVID-19 in Guatemala, Medical Teams has been focusing on strengthening the health system, providing support to partners managing local health facilities

messages through home visits. Afterward, handwashing kits were given to families in the Chicamán villages. With these new handwashing facilities, families can wash their hands frequently, and community leaders have expressed their gratitude.

Medical Teams is deeply grateful to all of its partners in the United States and in Guatemala who have given critically needed resources to contribute to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency response.

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through infection, prevention and control capacity building, and providing essential supplies and equipment. Medical Teams is also working to improve risk communication, surveillance, and case management, as well as working to reduce transmission by providing the means to maintain adequate hygiene in vulnerable communities.

For example, in Chicamán, Guatemala, 20 communities in which Medical Teams serves did not have handwashing facilities, making them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. In response, Medical Teams provided prevention training to all Community Health Water & Sanitation Commissions and replicated the

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