2018
HURRICANE
MICHAEL
RESPONSE

HEART TO HEART INTERNATIONAL
HURRICANE MICHAEL RESPONSE

Michael, a Category 4 hurricane with winds of 155 mph, made landfall on the Florida Panhandle on October 10, 2018. The powerful storm uprooted trees, downed power lines, destroyed buildings and threw vehicles through the air. 57 U.S. deaths were attributed to the storm, and it caused at least $15 billion in damage in the U.S.

Heart to Heart International (HHI) medical teams traveled through this destruction, contending with closed roads, power outages and nonexistent cell service. The HHI team ultimately positioned the Mobile Medical Unit in Panama City, Florida, in the parking lot of Deane Bozeman High School.

This school was designated as a "special needs shelter," meaning people in need of specialized care found by search and rescue were brought to that location. On Saturday, October 13, HHI processed 50 patients through the shelter, which involved assessing the patient's diagnosis and determining what care facility would be able to take them and best be able to meet their needs. Some of these patients included:

- A woman who was on hospice in her home, but also the caregiver for her husband who had previously suffered a traumatic brain injury and couldn't care for himself. When she could not convince him to evacuate, they stayed in their home throughout the storm. The storm destroyed their home and they were brought by rescue workers to the shelter.
- A paraplegic man with an ulcer who had been prematurely discharged from a hospital without proper antibiotics.
- A man who was in need of surgery for an infection in his fractured hand. The HHI team cleaned out the infection and arranged for transport to a hospital facility.

The HHI team worked in coordination with nurses at the shelter, and while the HHI doctor processed the patients, a caravan of ambulances waited outside to take each patient to the designated proper care facility.
In addition to working out of the MMU, HHI also treated patients at secondary locations, including clinics at St. John the Evangelist and St. Dominic Catholic Church. Team members also traveled with the Florida Department of Health into Mexico City Beach to provide care and deliver hygiene kits to those affected in that community.

Medical teams saw patients with a variety of medical needs, including: upper respiratory issues, infections, insect stings/bites, and skin conditions. They also provided prescription refills, wound and diabetes care and tetanus vaccinations.

HHI formed many partnerships with organizations also responding to the storm’s destruction, including an agreement with a lineman company to provide medical services in the event a lineman was injured while working to restore power to the affected areas.

Heart to Heart International’s initial Hurricane Michael medical response concluded with the last of the HHI teams leaving Florida on October 26, 2018. Throughout the course of the response, medical volunteers working with HHI logged 640 volunteer hours in service of those in need in the areas of Florida affected by the storm.

HHI continued its support of the area’s recovery by partnering with Amgen Foundation to install a Clinic in a Can in Panama City. The need for healthcare was still apparent, especially after it was announced that the major hospital in the area would not be reopening. Medical providers from Point Washington Medical Clinic started treating patients in the clinic in November. Many of these patients were struggling with respiratory difficulties stemming from living under tarps in the winter after their homes were damaged or demolished by the storm. From the beginning of December through the end of January 2019, medical providers saw almost 600 patients in the clinic.
Peter, 53 and a father of two, cut his leg while cleaning up from the storm. The wound became infected and caused enormous pain. The HHI medical team cleaned and treated his wound. Peter’s wife, Jelliot, was thankful to have found the HHI medical team.

“It was impossible to find a doctor—we are so grateful for Heart to Heart,” Jelliot said.

When a national guardsman went into anaphylactic shock after being stung by a yellow jacket, his unit brought him to HHI for treatment.

The medical team administered an epi pen, then gave him IV medications to stabilize him before the EMTs were able to transport him to the hospital.

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Michael, Kimberly Mutter’s son started experiencing seizures. She could not reach emergency services, so she set out on foot to the nearest hospital. While she made her way through the flood waters, she stepped on a rusty nail. The HHI team examined and cleaned her foot, and administered a tetanus vaccine.

A lineman fell and cut his scalp while working to restore power to affected areas around Panama Beach. His company brought him to the team at HHI to have the wound examined, cleaned, and stitched. HHI is proud to provide treatment and care to disaster first response workers in need of medical assistance.
RESPONSE BY THE NUMBERS

After Hurricane Michael crashed into the Florida Panhandle, Heart to Heart International responded with medical teams, medicines and medical supplies to help those in need.

**PATIENT ENCOUNTERS**

1,089

Patients seen by HHI medical volunteers.

**HYGIENE KITS DELIVERED**

11,790

Personal Hygiene Kits delivered to those in need in Florida.

**VACCINES ADMINISTERED**

667

Tetanus vaccines administered by HHI medical volunteers.

**PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

33

Number of partners HHI shipped aid to after Hurricane Michael.

**SHIPMENTS OF AID**

$174,010

Value of shipments from HHI to those in need in Florida. Shipments included medications, water, blankets, medical supplies, and hygiene kits.