

Samaritan's Purse responds to Haiti's cholera outbreak with medical teams and equipment

Calgary, AB – October 24, 2010 – Samaritan's Purse has responded to the deadly cholera outbreak in Haiti by quickly flying in additional medical teams – supplementing those that have been working there since Haiti's earthquake last January – plus a wide variety of medical and other equipment.

The Artibonite region of north-central Haiti remains under a state of emergency after cholera claimed 208 lives there in recent days. Nearly 2,700 more people have been infected. The World Health Organization confirmed five cases in the capital, Port-au-Prince, and areas outside of Artibonite remain on high alert.

Cholera is an acute diarrheal disease that causes severe vomiting and leg cramps. It is caused by the ingestion of food or water contaminated with a specific bacteria, and it can kill within hours after symptoms begin. As much as 80 per cent of cases can be successfully treated if victims receive proper care quickly.

"Samaritan's Purse has mobilized a specially trained Disaster and Assistance Response Team (DART)," said Fred Weiss, Samaritan's Purse Canada's executive director. "All our regular program activity in Haiti, including building shelters for tens of thousands of Haitians left homeless by the Jan. 12 earthquake, are suspended so we can devote all necessary personnel and resources to fighting this cholera outbreak."

Some highlights of Samaritan's Purse's cholera response so far:

- The DART has set up a community water filter in Boudette Petit Place that is providing safe water to thousands of local residents. The team will install a second filter in Villard today.
- The Samaritan's Purse helicopter has brought a medical team and supplies such as cots, IV solution, and oral rehydration salts to an overwhelmed hospital in Marchand Dessalines. The team has established hand-washing stations and a rehydration tent.
- A second medical team has set up a mobile rehydration center in Villard that includes more than 30 cots. The center is capable of treating the moderately ill so they don't have to rely on Haiti's already-overwhelmed health care system.
- Our nurses are going door-to-door in Villard distributing bars of soap, offering health information, and determining if anyone needs treatment at our rehydration center or another health facility.
- We are working with local Christian partners to develop and distribute awareness and prevention materials (including hygiene training) in the Creole language.

The Samaritan's Purse supplies sent to Haiti since the cholera outbreak began include two community water filters, 60 cases of IV solution, 144 IV kits, 480 hygiene kits, 144,480 water purification sachets, 1,064 water purification kits, 20 garden sprayers for decontamination, rubber boots and rubber gloves.

Donations Needed:

To support Samaritan's Purse Canada in this urgent relief and recovery work, please visit www.samaritanpurse.ca or call 1-800-663-6500.

About Samaritan's Purse Canada:

Samaritan's Purse Canada is an international Christian relief and development organization working in about 70 countries to provide aid to victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty, famine, and persecution. The Calgary-based charity also operates the well-known Operation Christmas Child program that sends

gift-filled shoe boxes to needy children around the world each year, and the Turn on the Tap initiative that raises funds for life-saving BioSand Water Filters in the developing world.

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