COVID-19
Situation Report #23
23 July 2020

Key Updates

- Project HOPE began deploying medical personnel to support Harris Health System’s response to the surge of cases in the greater Houston area.
- Project HOPE medical teams continue to support long-term care facilities in the City of Chicago and Suburban Cook County reduce COVID-19 infections.
- More than 157,000 pieces of PPE were recently delivered to Uzbekistan, Namibia and Colombia and will be distributed in coming weeks.
- With support from the UBS Optimus Foundation, Project HOPE is launching efforts to help ensure the safety of healthcare workers in Indonesia and the Philippines with equipment, capacity building and training on infection prevention and control.
- Project HOPE remains dedicated to strengthening the preparedness and response capacity of healthcare workers through multiple training platforms in partnership with institutions including Brown University, DisasterReady, the Weitzman Institute, University of New Mexico, and others.

Situation Update

Project HOPE continues to monitor changes in the global COVID-19 pandemic and adjust response efforts and global health programming affected by the virus as needed. Throughout this pandemic, countries and communities, such as Italy and New York City, have managed to harness the spread of COVID-19 while cases begin to surge in other areas, like we are seeing in Brazil and Houston, TX.

Texas is now experiencing critical levels of COVID-19 infections and straining the healthcare system. Harris County, where Project HOPE recently deployed medical teams (see page 2), has seen an 18.6% increase in new cases over the last week. According to the Houston Mayor’s Office, approximately 25% of COVID-19 tests administered to Houston residents are coming back positive. Hospitals across the county, including those where Project HOPE medical personnel are deployed, are experiencing surges in patient...
loads, exacerbated by providers and other staff falling ill to the disease. In recent days, there have been promising declines in the number of COVID-19 intensive care unit (ICU) cases across Houston; however, the next few weeks will be critical in ensuring these trends continue.

In Arizona, Project HOPE recently drew down its medical team providing support to Chinle Hospital in Navajo Nation. In mid-May, Navajo Nation surpassed New York state with the highest COVID-19 infection rate in the U.S. While Arizona currently has the eighth highest number of confirmed cases in the country, Navajo Nation has seen a precipitous decline over the last month due to widespread adoption of prevention behaviors and increased testing and contact tracing. For more on this success story, see "The Calm Amidst the Storm" on p. 5 by Project HOPE's Chief Health Officer, Dr. Tom Kenyon.

**HOPE's U.S. Response**

**Medical Team Deploys to TX in coordination with Harris Health Systems**

As COVID-19 cases continue to increase in the greater Houston area, Project HOPE has deployed a medical surge team to support Harris Health System, the public healthcare system for the residents of Harris County, Texas. Harris Health System has identified more than a dozen medical roles they need filled to help meet the increasing needs of hospitals in its network. Its hospitals are overwhelmed with patients in the ICU and health staff is in great need of support and respite.

Project HOPE is actively recruiting to fill as many identified gaps and staffing needs as possible, working hand in hand with Harris Health System to recruit, orient, and place Project HOPE medical team members in units where they can provide the most support. Currently, Project HOPE team members are working in the ICU at Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital and in occupational health at Ben Taub Hospital. See the full press release [here](#).

**Reducing Infection Risk at Long-Term Care Facilities in Illinois**

Project HOPE remains focused on supporting long-term care facilities (LTCFs) throughout the City of Chicago and Suburban Cook County. To-date, Project HOPE medical teams have served 42 LTCFs with assessments, infection mitigation planning and implementation and follow-up support. More than 5,900 residents live in these facilities, which have reported more than 2,543 COVID-19 cases to-date.

**HOPE's Global Response**

**PPE and Medical Supplies to Uzbekistan, Namibia and Colombia**

Project HOPE continues to procure and distribute PPE and medical supplies to support frontline health care workers in heavily affected countries. Over the
past two weeks, Project HOPE has distributed items procured through an ongoing partnership with Latter-day Saint Charities, including:

- **22,780** pieces of PPE and **18,000** COVID-19 tests handed over to the Uzbekistan Ministry of Health. PPE items included protective coveralls, isolation gowns, goggles, and sterile surgical gloves.

- **78,000** surgical masks and **3,750** isolation gowns recently arrived in Namibia and will be distributed by Project HOPE in the coming weeks.

- **56,400** N95 respirator masks arrived in Cúcuta, Colombia this week. Project HOPE is working in direct coordination with the Instituto Departamental de Salud in Norte de Sander to allocate these masks to priority hospitals throughout the region and will oversee distribution in the coming weeks.

Project HOPE will continue to procure PPE and medical supplies as long as the supply chain remains intact and funding is available. Additional procurements are expected for partners in the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Uzbekistan over the following month with more in the pipeline.

**Protecting Frontline Health Workers in Indonesia and the Philippines**

Project HOPE, with support from the UBS Optimus Foundation, is working to protect the frontline in response to COVID-19 by ensuring the safety of health care workers with equipment, capacity building and training on infection prevention and control (IPC) in Indonesia and the Philippines. As the virus spreads, health care workers are ill-equipped to deal with the influx of patients. Not only are they overwhelmed by the sheer number of cases, they are also particularly susceptible to infection due to their repeated exposure and the lack of IPC measures. The program will distribute **16,000** PPE packages, train **200** new master trainers and **10,000** health care workers in COVID-19 preparedness and response, and support **24** hospitals with IPC technical assistance and monitoring.

This program will expand upon Project HOPE’s current response efforts in Indonesia, which have included PPE distribution and training more than **40,000** health care workers and frontline personnel in various COVID-19 preparedness and response modules. Project HOPE also recently partnered with PERDALIN, the Indonesia Society of Infection and Control, to strengthen IPC at hospitals.

**COVID-19 Training for Frontline Health Workers**

Project HOPE continues to strengthen capacity of frontline health workers and personnel in COVID-19 preparedness and response through multiple training and education platforms.
E-Learning: since its launch at the end of June, more than 1,500 individuals from 119 countries and regions have begun the course and 158 have completed all eight modules.

Training-of-Trainers: Project HOPE continues to train Master Trainers and oversee cascade trainings of its COVID-19 preparedness and response curriculum developed in partnership with Brown University. To-date, nearly 2,000 Master Trainers have subsequently trained more than 51,000 health care workers and frontline personnel across 31 countries. Over the past two weeks, training were implemented in Egypt, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Indonesia. More trainings are scheduled over the next month for partners in Kyrgyzstan, Bangladesh and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

Project ECHO: COVID-19 ECHO sessions supported by Project HOPE reached more than 220 health care workers across LAC over the last two weeks. Project HOPE and the Weitzman Institute also held another ECHO on “Innovations in Contact Tracing from California” on July 15, which can be viewed here.

Calm Amidst the Storm

Amidst a dramatic escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Arizona, recently among the highest incidence of new cases in any state in the country. Project HOPE drew down its deployment of medical team to the Navajo Nation hospital for COVID-19 patients in Chinle, Arizona. Why would HOPE then withdrawal when the State of Arizona has one of the highest number of cases in the country? Because the Navajo Nation leaders have taken forceful action and provided leadership. It has been so successful with social distancing, testing, contact investigation, and wearing masks – all interventions known to prevent transmission. The case rate for COVID-19 in its vast tribal lands, which at one time was the highest in the nation, has declined precipitously.

The pandemic has calmed down in Navajo Nation while a storm of COVID-19 escalates across the rest of the state. This shows the importance of knowing local disease patterns to guide your response, and how misleading statewide or nationwide figures can be when compared to specific localities. The reality is that there are multiple, concurrent in any community and each need to be managed by local leaders with the right evidence-based approaches. As agreed upon with Navajo Nation leaders, Project HOPE has withdrawn its COVID-19 medical team but will return if needed. Congratulations Navajo Nation and thank you for showing us what works!

- Dr. Tom Kenyon, Project HOPE
  Chief Health Officer

Read a first-hand account by a Project HOPE volunteer nurse deployed to Navajo Nation.

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