



Hurricane Idalia aftermath in Horseshoe Beach, Florida. Photo by Project HOPE, 2023.

Situation Report #3

September 6, 2023

Key Highlights



Hurricane Idalia made landfall roughly 75 miles southeast of Tallahassee, along Florida's Big Bend region, as a strong Category 3 storm. The storm continued as a Category 1 storm in southeast Georgia.



Communities in Florida's Big Bend region experienced powerful storm surges and high winds, resulting in flooding, power outages, and the destruction of hundreds of homes and businesses.



Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team deployed in the storm's aftermath to deliver hygiene items, including diapers, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, and other essential items to protect the health needs of affected communities.

Situation Overview

Hurricane Idalia made landfall as a powerful [Category 3 storm](#) on August 30 in Florida's Big Bend region near Keaton Beach, with maximum sustained winds of 125 miles per hour. The storm continued as a [Category 1 storm](#) as it moved into [Georgia](#) and then as a [tropical storm in South Carolina](#).

Florida's Big Bend region, between Tampa and Tallahassee, an area [highly susceptible to flooding](#), experienced storm surges that flooded coastal areas and [destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses](#). Major damage spanned 100 miles, affecting the towns of [Steinhatchee](#), [Perry](#), [Cedar Key](#), [Keaton Beach](#), and [Horseshoe Beach](#). Storm surges stretched along the coast to the communities hit hardest by Hurricane Ian last fall, but no major damage was reported in those areas.

Electrical power has returned to many of those initially affected, with [only 11,000 without power](#) nearly a week after the storm. While the power being restored was a major step toward getting affected communities back on their feet, Project HOPE's team has received several reports from local health care facilities that power outages caused them to lose their supply of medicines, especially medicines requiring cold-chain storage.

Project HOPE's Response

Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team (ERT) was providing support in Florida within 24 hours of the storm's departure. The team immediately connected with Palms Medical Group, a nonprofit clinic in Live Oak, Florida, to provide assistance to affected clinics.

With the insight from Palms Medical Group, the ERT delivered hygiene supplies, including diapers, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, and other essential items to the clinic, which is located in Suwannee County, where [a state-run distribution site remains open](#).

Through Project HOPE's partnership with MAP International, we are providing additional disaster hygiene kits to Palm Medical Group for distribution within the community.

On Friday, Sept. 1, our team delivered additional hygiene items and cleaning supplies to Horseshoe Beach, where the wind and flooding [tore apart homes and businesses](#).



Project HOPE Emergency Response Team members delivering hygiene supplies to Horseshoe Beach, Florida, which sustained major damage from Hurricane Idalia. Photo by Project HOPE, 2023.



Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team delivering supplies to the owners of a local marina in Steinhatchee, Florida, a town where most roads remain closed and officials have informed community members that power may not be restored for up to 30 days due to damage from Hurricane Idalia. Photo by Project HOPE staff, 2023.

Project HOPE also provided a generator to Partnership Health Center in Valdosta, Georgia, which serves between 4,500 and 5,000 patients yearly for Federally Qualified Health Center services. With this generator, Partnership Health Center will be able to safely supply patients in need with medicines that require cold-chain storage, like insulin. Project HOPE previously collaborated with Partnership Health Center to support community-based efforts to increase access to and confidence in COVID-19 vaccines.



A refrigerator at Partnership Health Center in Valdosta, Georgia running properly thanks to a generator supplied by Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team. Photo by Project HOPE staff, 2023.

Over the weekend, Project HOPE's team visited Steinhatchee and provided hygiene items and cleaning supplies to a distribution center at the marina that supports about 1,000 community members a day. In Dixie County, Project HOPE coordinated with the emergency management office to supply their distribution sites with essential items.

At this time, Project HOPE's ERT has been deactivated after addressing crucial hygiene needs in the affected communities. Project HOPE has determined that federal, state, and local resources are well-equipped to meet the needs of affected communities and our ERT has completed its response.

Project HOPE previously responded to Hurricane Ian in southwest Florida in 2022 and has ongoing programming supporting affected communities. Project HOPE provided partner support and directly engaged with communities following the storm. The ERT provided direct medical provision through the deployment of medical volunteers to Pine Island and surrounding areas and distributed cleaning supplies, basic hygiene supplies, and other essentials to approximately 12,000 community members. Through a partnership with the Multicultural Center in Sarasota, Project HOPE continued to support the distribution of those items for several months and funded a care coordination program to ensure that community members living through poverty were supported and able to access the health care they needed. In collaboration with Capacity Path, Project HOPE provided mental health resiliency trainings to frontline health workers as they processed trauma and recovered from acute stress in the storm's aftermath.