From late in the evening on December 10 through the morning of December 11, a series of severe tornadoes tore through the midwestern United States. The storm ravaged a path of more than 250 miles, devastating counties throughout the region. After one week of response efforts, search-and-rescue operations have ceased, as all missing persons have been accounted for. The fatality rate continues to rise, however, as many injured in the tornado remain in critical care. As of December 20, nearly 950 persons in Kentucky have been displaced and thousands remain without electricity. Governor Andy Beshear announced that those displaced could receive emergency food and housing at seven of the state parks.\(^1\) The free lodging that was initially declared for two weeks in response to the tornadoes has now been extended to four weeks.

Affected communities continue to implement recovery efforts, including damage assessments and debris management, restoration of utilities, roadway clearing and the re-fueling and maintenance of public generators, heaters and portable light towers. In addition to emergency response operations, county officials have had to increase security measures to protect victims from crimes committed against vulnerable communities. With valuables such as household items, medical commodities and other property without proper storage or security now vulnerable due to disruption caused by the storms, police have encountered an increase in criminal activity, particularly from non-Kentucky residents.\(^2\)

**International Medical Corps Response**

Following the tornadoes, International Medical Corps immediately mobilized an emergency response team to assess damage and determine needs in the hardest-hit communities in Kentucky. The team currently is working closely with local, state and federal emergency-management officials and local organizations to understand the full scope of needs in affected communities. The team also continues to monitor response efforts in other hard-hit states.

International Medical Corps is partnering with KentuckyCare, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) with locations in Arkansas, Kentucky and Mississippi. KentuckyCare has multiple locations in Graves County, including one location in Mayfield and several in the surrounding communities. KentuckyCare has positioned its mobile medical unit (MMU) adjacent to the tornado-affected area to reach new and existing patients. The FQHC is also operating telehealth appointments out of an MMU, provided by Heart to Heart International, that is located at one of the state parks that has been designated to temporarily house persons displaced by the tornado. The medical care offered includes primary care.

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\(^2\) [https://www.wtvq.com/police-agencies-on-alert-for-those-scaming-tornado-victims/](https://www.wtvq.com/police-agencies-on-alert-for-those-scaming-tornado-victims/)
as well as behavioral health care. Current needs among KentuckyCare and other local health providers include continuity of care among existing patients, access to care for tornado-affected community members, and the livelihood and wellbeing of clinic staff. International Medical Corps is prepared to support local health facilities with equipment, supplies and staff support, and will continue to assess needs on a regular basis.

International Medical Corps continues to engage with the Graves County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to monitor ongoing public health needs in the aftermath of the tornado. We expect there to be an increase in demand for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) among affected communities, as well as COVID-related support due to the increase in community members temporarily residing in congregate settings.

US Programs Lead Dr. John Roberts (center) visits Heart to Heart International’s MMU along with team members from KentuckyCare.