



The ARcare health network's mobile medical unit has temporarily been positioned outside KentuckyCare's clinic in Murray, which will be opening soon.

FAST FACTS

- On December 10–11, a series of tornadoes struck the midwestern United States.
- 52 tornadoes were reported in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio.
- In Kentucky alone, nearly 90 deaths were reported and nearly 1,000 persons were displaced.
- Kentucky is experiencing a COVID positivity rate of 26% and ICU occupancy of more than 85%.

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 more than 250 miles long, devastating counties throughout the region.

Nearly 950 of the thousands of displaced persons in Kentucky have received emergency food and housing at seven state parks, as part of the state response effort.¹ As of January 11, nearly 500 displaced persons, as well as 140 emergency responders, remain in housing at the state parks. Governor Andy Beshear has extended emergency accommodation at the state parks for an additional 30 days to ensure a smooth transition to a semi-permanent housing solution.²

In response to a request by the state of Kentucky, President Joe Biden amended the state's disaster declaration, allocating all federal funds, including direct federal assistance, to debris removal and emergency protective measures.

The ongoing response and recovery efforts have been further challenged by spiking COVID cases. Last week, Kentucky public health officials reported 52,603 new cases of COVID-19—the state's highest total number of weekly cases since the start of the pandemic, exceeding its previous record by more than 20,000 cases. As Kentucky's health system is faced with controlling new cases and increased acuity, the health facilities in the tornado-affected areas continue to be strained. With cases surging and hospitalizations increasing, the governor has deployed 445 National Guard members to 30 healthcare facilities in the state.

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, Mayfield, where the collapse of a large candle factory and the resulting deaths marked the most devastating tornado event in the state's history. International Medical Corps has partnered with KentuckyCare, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) in the ARcare health network, that delivers comprehensive primary care, urgent care, vaccination and mental health services with multiple locations in Graves County, including one location in Mayfield and several in the surrounding communities.

After conducting needs assessments alongside KentuckyCare's leadership team, International Medical Corps is supporting the FQHC with staffing, supplies and equipment. The initial tornado response created significant staffing needs

¹ <https://www.wlwt.com/article/kentucky-state-parks-providing-free-lodging-food-to-tornado-victims/38514583#>

² https://www.paducahsun.com/news/beshear-updates-on-tornado-relief-covid-19/article_56f61c7b-e718-5011-bb6d-d308162d9a89.html

for KentuckyCare, caused by increased patient loads, coverage for staff affected by the tornadoes, home health visits, shelter health visits and pharmaceutical delivery conducted by any staff that could assist. As KentuckyCare staff continue to provide services in the aftermath of the tornado, International Medical Corps will be providing financial support to ensure that adequate staffing is available at KentuckyCare clinics.

In addition to staffing, International Medical Corps is providing equipment and supplies to KentuckyCare clinics, including mobile generators and equipment to support information communication technology that will be procured to support mobile medical units and telehealth services. Clinics that experienced power outtages also will receive pharmaceutical support to replenish cold-chain commodities such as vaccines.

KentuckyCare is utilizing an ARcare mobile medical unit (MMU), which has been positioned adjacent to the tornado-affected area, to reach new and existing patients. The MMU is in the parking lot of KentuckyCare's newest site, the Murray clinic, which will be opening soon. International Medical Corps is working with KentuckyCare to procure equipment and supplies to expedite the opening of the new location, to accommodate increased patient loads from both the tornadoes and the increase in COVID-19.

KentuckyCare also is operating telehealth appointments out of an MMU located at one of the state parks that has been designated to temporarily house persons displaced by the tornado. The MMU, which was provided by Heart to Heart International, is equipped with advanced telehealth equipment. The medical care offered in the MMU includes primary care as well as behavioral health care.



International Medical Corps' US Programs Lead Dr. John Roberts (left) takes inventory alongside a staff member of Heart to Heart International in its mobile medical unit.