



More than 50 tornadoes tore across the Midwest in December. In Kentucky, 11,700 buildings were damaged or destroyed. Recovery efforts will cost an estimated \$2.9 billion.

FAST FACTS

- On December 10–11, a series of tornadoes swept through 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.
- International Medical Corps' partner KentuckyCare has provided more than 1,300 primary and mental health care consultations and expanded telehealth to support survivors.

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 Kentucky region. More than three months after tornadoes decimated Mayfield, Kentucky, hundreds of women, men and children remain displaced from their homes.

Recovery efforts continue to focus on debris removal, with priority placed on hazardous trees and stumps left behind. In the midst of ongoing debris removal and reconstruction, Kentucky State Parks continues to provide temporary housing and food to more than 800 people at park sites.

COVID-19 remains a concern for affected communities. Though COVID-19 rates continue to fall, the outbreak—including the new BA.2 variant—continues to be a concern for those sheltering in congregate settings and for constantly stressed healthcare facilities. Positivity rates are currently at 2.27% statewide; however, vaccination levels remain relatively low, at with a bit more than 50% of all eligible ages of the population fully vaccinated. Governor Beshear reported that the Omicron BA.2 sub-variant has been confirmed in Kentucky residents from 13 different counties since the first week of February. Based on some early studies, BA.2 is thought to spread faster than the initial Omicron variant; however, it is too soon to know whether BA.2 will lead to an overall increase in cases, hospitalizations and deaths, if it causes more severe disease or if it can evade immunity from vaccines or prior infections.

To support recovery efforts, on March 15 President Biden signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, helping to increase available resources for families and communities affected by these storms. As a result, the federal government will increase its cost share from 75% to 90% for any major disaster declared from January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2021, including the December storms, and will pay 100% of the costs of immediate emergency recovery measures, including debris removal, sheltering, emergency operations, evacuation, and search and rescue. However, healthcare and the costs of meeting ongoing health needs still remain largely underfunded.

International Medical Corps Response

Following the tornadoes, International Medical Corps immediately mobilized an emergency response team to support response and recovery services in the hardest-hit communities—including Mayfield, Kentucky, 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 community-based healthcare provider, to increase capacity to deliver health services to families and communities affected by the storms. KentuckyCare is part of the broader ARcare health network, which delivers comprehensive primary care, urgent care, vaccination and mental health services with multiple locations across the south and midwest. With the support of International Medical Corps, KentuckyCare is increasing its capacity to meet the evolving needs of patients affected by the storm, and to more quickly open of a second clinic adjacent to the tornado-affected area, helping to bring additional services to Mayfield and surroundings.

Over the last two months:

- KentuckyCare deployed teams—including clinic nurses, insurance advisors, lab coordinators and referral specialists—to the epicenter of the affected area, ensuring that people were able to get the care they needed. They provided some 1,300 patient consultations, including more than 1,000 primary care visits, along with COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, mental health visits and specialty referrals.
- KentuckyCare established new telehealth capacity, including installing IT equipment at state park shelters and housing sites, to help reach patients displaced by the storms. Within the first several weeks of operation, it conducted 132 telehealth mental health visits, accounting for 10% of the overall consultations.
- International Medical Corps continued to procure exam-room equipment and furniture, to support the opening of the second health clinic. Items include examination tables, chairs, stools, biohazard bins, medical equipment, and information and communication technology equipment, such as laptops, computers, docking stations and scanners to support patient care.
- We are continuing to procure specialty devices and other needed medical equipment, such as a scale specifically designed for individuals in wheelchairs, nebulizers to deliver inhaled medications for those suffering from asthma or COPD, and a hemoglobin monitoring device to support overall health monitoring.
- International Medical Corps also is working with KentuckyCare to secure a patient transport vehicle that is wheelchair-accessible, to help clients travel to and from the clinic. This will help ensure continuity of care for patients with chronic diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, wound care and essential preventative care, and help the community avoid and mitigate chronic diseases for years to come.

Moving forward, International Medical Corps and KentuckyCare will continue to increase access to health services for Kentucky families affected by these storms and their aftermath. With people displaced by the tornadoes being moved out of temporary emergency housing and into semi-permanent accommodations, the demand for care may change at KentuckyCare's various clinic locations. International Medical Corps will remain flexible to continue help meet these families' most pressing needs.