



International Medical Corps emergency response team members meet with a local partner in the beginning of the response. Though the fires have ended, we are continuing to partner with local organizations and health centers to support communities' long-term recovery.

From January 7–31, a series of wildfires raged across the Los Angeles region, destroying more than 16,000 homes, businesses and community centers and displacing more than 200,000 people. Though the physical impact of the fires can be easily measured, the human impact remains more difficult to see—but is often the longest-lasting.

The fires have made a profound impact on Los Angeles communities, destabilizing many lives. Almost three months later, many residents are struggling to find temporary or long-term housing solutions while they struggle to navigate new financial situations due to loss of wages, changes in work, schools and communities, limited access to essential services like drinkable water and heightened mental and emotional stress. The impacts of the fire remain very real to many.

Children, families, older people, people experiencing homelessness and essential workers have been disproportionately impacted by this crisis and remain among the most vulnerable. Organizations providing care in areas like Skid Row, and South and West Los Angeles have also recorded a notable increase in the need and number of unhoused people.

As with many disasters, local partners have reported a significant increase in urgent and critical mental health needs in the community, with many patients having experienced trauma in the fires. The demand for care has risen dramatically and local organizations are working hard to provide care in a

FAST FACTS

- A series of wildfires raged across Los Angeles in January, burning more than 16,000 structures and displacing entire communities.
- Months later, many families and individuals are still in need of temporary shelter and long-term housing support. There is also a significant demand for mental health care, as affected community members continue to process the magnitude of the loss and change. The elderly, unhoused populations, and low-income and essential workers remain particularly vulnerable.
- Many health centers and social service organizations have reported staff members who have been directly affected by the fires, decreasing organizational capacity to meet increased community needs.

OUR RESPONSE

- International Medical Corps is now providing housing stipends and household items for staff and clients at five local FQHCs and partner organizations. In the coming weeks, we will train staff from 30 health clinics and local organizations to build their emergency response capacity, helping them to meet the challenges of future disasters.
- From January 17 to February 16, International Medical Corps provided direct medical and mental health services in two regional shelters and various community centers and distribution sites. Teams conducted 872 medical consultations and provided 632 residents with primary nursing care, conducted 1,248 mental health consultations and provided 3,145 people with mental health outreach services and [resources](#).
- We distributed more than 40,000 response, recovery and medical items, 5,856 hygiene kits, 4,903 wound-care kits, 35,600 face masks and equipment for internet services.
- International Medical Corps continues to coordinate closely with local, state and regional agencies, including the Los Angeles Mayor's Office, California Department of Public Health, California Emergency Medical Services Authority, California Primary Care Association, California Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County, the Red Cross, and local organizations, shelters and health centers serving low-income and other vulnerable groups to support ongoing recovery efforts.

challenging situation. However, health centers and local organizations have been directly impacted by the fires themselves; some partners have reported damaged or completely destroyed facilities, depleted supplies and stock (due to damage, or unanticipated spikes in demand), and dozens of staff who have lost their homes—reducing the health centers’ operational and financial capacity to meet heightened need.

International Medical Corps’ Response

When the Palisades fire broke out on January 7, International Medical Corps immediately deployed an Emergency Response Team; working closely with national, state, county and local responders—including the American Red Cross, the California Department of Public Health, the California Primary Care Association and the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County—to meet the needs of vulnerable community members. We continue to partner with them to provide long-term recovery services.

From January 17 to February 16, International Medical Corps deployed a total of 58 medical and mental health professionals—many of whom are California and Los Angeles locals—to provide critical medical and mental health care in shelters, as well as at community distribution centers, events and re-entry points. In collaboration with the Red Cross, International Medical Corps provided around-the-clock medical and mental health care to residents affected by both the Palisades and Eaton fires, in the Westwood Recreation Center shelter and the Pasadena Convention Center shelter respectively. We also managed the isolation unit in the Pasadena shelter. With the onset of the Hughes fire, our medical teams were quickly deployed to provide care within the College of the Canyon shelter. Over the course of this direct response, International Medical Corps conducted 872 medical consultations and provided 632 residents with primary nursing care, conducted 1,248 mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) consultations and provided 3,145 people with mental health outreach services.

We also partnered with 16 different organizations and health sites to provide urgently needed medical and non-medical supplies, helping to support their response to the community. These supplies include more than 40,000 recovery and medical items, 35,600 KN95 and N95 face masks, 244 air-quality items (including nebulizer compressors and air purifiers), and 4,903 wound-care kits, among other items.

Recovery: Moving Forward

International Medical Corps remains committed to the long-term and sustainable recovery of Los Angeles communities, partnering with organizations that are delivering ongoing response and recovery services to those affected by the fires. For example, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and those most heavily impacted, we are working with federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), free and charitable clinics, and social-service organizations reaching people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Ongoing priorities and needs identified by International Medical Corps include:

- urgent housing support for displaced staff and affected community members;
- mental health and trauma-focused services; and
- emergency management and preparedness capacity training for local health centers and organizations, ensuring that community can maintain access to care and necessary resources during recovery and as they prepare for the next emergency.

Several FQHCs that provide care in the Eaton Fire-affected communities of Altadena, Pasadena and surrounding areas of LA—including Crescenta, Montrose and Sylmar, as well the Palisades-affected communities near Santa Monica—have reported dozens of staff and patients who have lost their homes and continue to suffer severe losses. There is an urgent need for assistance with rent and household essentials for those affected. In response, International Medical Corps provided housing vouchers to one health center with more than 15 staff who lost homes in the fires, enabling them to find housing and continue providing care. We continue to work with three FQHC networks to provide housing allowances and direct cash assistance for staff and patients, whose resources continue to be stretched thin by fallout from the fires.

In response to an exponential increase in the unhoused populations in Skid Row, MacArthur Park, and South and West Los Angeles, International Medical Corps is delivering wound-care kits, hygiene items and other health-related supplies to partner organizations to distribute to their clients. One partner reported, that within the last month, it already has provided care to about one-third the number of clients it usually sees in an entire year. International Medical Corps also is providing



An International Medical Corps volunteer nurse conducts a medical consultation with a resident of the Westwood Recreation Center shelter.

additional mental health resources and a clinician to a local organization that focuses on unhoused people, helping it to meet increased mental health needs across its temporary housing facilities.

In response to requests from local partners, International Medical Corps is expanding its emergency management training programs to provide staff from some 30 partner organizations—including FQHCs, health centers and local organizations—with practical tools, equipment and technical assistance for all facets and phases of emergency management. Adapted from our existing suite of training curriculums, these training programs will help health centers and organizations to better prepare for and respond to future disasters. Topics will include business continuity planning, psychological first aid, hazard vulnerability assessments, severe weather preparation and mitigation, infectious disease preparedness and more. We are also collaborating with regional partners, including the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County, to support similar county-wide capacity strengthening efforts, ensuring both the reach and sustainability of these activities.

International Medical Corps in the US and Territories

International Medical Corps has been an emergency responder in the United States and Caribbean since 2005, when we partnered with local community clinics overwhelmed by Hurricane Katrina. In the US, International Medical Corps works with national, state and local partners and agencies to deploy emergency response teams in response to disasters and address the significant challenges that face domestic healthcare services.

In the last seven years, we have engaged and supported a partner network of more than 275 hospitals, clinics, health and health-related facilities, and non-profit organizations across 18 states and territories in the United States, delivering health resources, services and training to more than 6 million patients and providers. We have collaborated since 2020 with the LA County Department of Public Health Services, LA Homeless Services Authority and local partner organizations.

In 2020 and 2021, International Medical Corps implemented a robust response to the COVID-19 outbreak nationwide. In the greater Los Angeles area, we deployed emergency medical field units and equipment to seven LA-area safety-net hospitals, delivered training and personal protective equipment to 51 LA-area long-term eldercare facilities and 176 LA-area health workers, managed a vaccination site at Kedren Community Health Center in south LA that delivered more than 140,000 vaccinations, and distributed 305 pieces of medical equipment and more than 2 million pieces of personal protective equipment to LA-area hospitals, health facilities and emergency medical services. In 2021, International Medical Corps conducted a multi-component project in California’s Central Valley to build the capacity of vulnerable populations in wildfire-impacted communities to better withstand and recover from wildfires.

Response to LA Wildfires

16 sites supported	58 medical and MHPSS professionals deployed
5,856 hygiene kits distributed	1,280 first-aid kits distributed
39,049 hygiene products distributed	22,800 masks distributed
1,583 medical supplies distributed	3,623 wound-care kits distributed
1,194 other relief & recovery supplies distributed	244 air purifiers and air-quality items distributed
1,261 MHPSS consultations	3,145 participants in MHPSS outreach
872 medical consultations	632 patients given primary nursing care
56,637 direct beneficiaries	140,658 indirect beneficiaries