



Dr. Bryan Sloane talks with Grand Bahama resident Patrice Cooper. Our team gave her a blood-pressure monitoring machine and vitamins to help her remain healthy despite the challenges she's currently facing.

FAST FACTS

- The Royal Bahamas Police Force confirmed the death toll at 61 as of Friday, October 11. Recovery efforts are ongoing, and the number of fatalities is expected to rise.
- International Medical Corps conducted “Training of Trainers” sessions from October 8–11 that trained 30 participants in health, WASH and MHPSS.
- Since the beginning of the response until October 14, International Medical Corps has provided 808 patient consultations in all supported clinics.

SITUATION UPDATE

More than a month-and-a-half has passed since Hurricane Dorian slammed into Grand Bahama and Abaco islands with wind speeds of 180 mph and gusts of up to 220 mph, making it the northern Atlantic's the second-strongest hurricane in modern records. Satellite imagery indicated that more than three-quarters of homes between High Rock, in the middle of Grand Bahama, and Sweetings Cay, in the very east of the island, have been destroyed.

As of Friday, October 11, the Royal Bahamas Police Force confirmed the death toll at 61. Recovery efforts are ongoing, but with hundreds still missing, the number of fatalities is expected to continue to rise. More than 875 missing people have been found; this number is expected to change as the list of missing persons is cross-checked against shelter lists and other records of displaced individuals.

Conditions are slowly returning to normal on Grand Bahama. Most schools are expected to reopen on Tuesday, October 15, though due to the low number of schoolchildren in the community—in one case, a school that is typically attended by 1,000 students will have fewer than 500 attending—mold-remediation work will continue in the schools while students return to class.

The Public Hospitals Authority (PHA) mental health team continues to provide services to the population, despite being without two of their regular psychiatrists. They have requested help to support the current staff in meeting the growing mental health needs of the population. International Medical Corps has partnered with the PHA and Bahamian Ministry of Health (MoH) to provide mental health and psychosocial support on Grand Bahama.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS RESPONSE

Working closely with the PHA, International Medical Corps conducted Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions from October 8–11. The 30 participants included community leaders, teachers, social workers and service providers from Rand Memorial Hospital and the island's clinics, which are supported by International Medical Corps. The ToT participants will train Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) who in turn will educate their communities about measures to ensure community health; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

Our volunteer staff, currently composed of one pharmacist, three doctors and seven nurses, continue to operate across nine health facilities on Grand Bahama. Since the beginning of the response until October 14, International Medical Corps has provided more than 800 patients consultations in all supported clinics, and has provided community education on health, WASH and MHPSS to 1,235 people. The team also has helped the PHA create and distribute social media graphics and messaging around community health and WASH.

In the upcoming week, our team plans to travel by boat to Sweetings Cay to assess the needs of the remote community where most homes were destroyed during the storm. Though water is being restored in some communities, the general manager of the Grand Bahama water utility has mentioned that 90% of the customers who will get their water restored will initially only have access to non-potable water. Consequently, International Medical Corps will provide water to communities through water trucking until December.

Working with the national MHPSS coordination group in Nassau, which is led by the MoH, International Medical Corps and Caritas Internationalis have established an MHPSS Sub-Working Group for Grand Bahama, to enable more in-depth collaboration and assist efforts to evaluate the mental health needs of the population.

In honor of World Mental Health Day, October 10, MHPSS experts from our team were guests on a radio show, where they identified the normal reactions to adversity, and explained how to support those who are having difficulties coping and how to access services. An International Medical Corps communications specialist also helped the PHA create a social media campaign to raise awareness around mental health, explaining how the population can seek help.

These efforts were further supported by the ToT sessions focusing on MHPSS. The community leaders, doctors, nurses and teachers trained in psychological first aid and the importance of self-care learned not only about how to help others but also learned to better cope themselves with the overwhelming devastation that Hurricane Dorian has brought upon their lives and communities.



International Medical Corps conducting training classes this month to build capacity in a number of healthcare-related areas on Grand Bahama. Pictured here are some of the trainers who will train community health volunteers (CHVs) in their communities.