

## Delivering Medical Assistance Along the Gulf Coast

“Nobody else will take you if you don’t have health insurance – they turn you down.” Sharon, a cook in a seafood restaurant, sums up the personal health care crisis for thousands of families in the Gulf Coast region still affected by Hurricane Katrina. Since 2005, Sharon and her family, along with so many other victims, have struggled in the wake of the disaster, followed by the financial crisis and the massive BP oil spill.



Photo by Matthew McDermott

**Sharon, right, receives special care from her nurse at Coastal Family Health Center in Biloxi, MS, one of over 200 health clinics AmeriCares supports with medical assistance.**

Fortunately Sharon, diagnosed with both high blood pressure and high cholesterol, receives quality health care and free medications from the AmeriCares-supported Coastal Family Health Center in Biloxi, Mississippi. As Sharon said, “Without the clinic, I don’t know what I would do.”

Since the first days of our Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, AmeriCares has partnered with local organizations to provide health care and support for community volunteer projects. Wherever we could make a difference – from child immunization to dental care – we have helped fill gaps throughout the Gulf region. And as long as we are needed, AmeriCares will continue to help Sharon and countless others who had their lives swept away by the hurricane or seriously damaged by the man-made disasters that followed.

Thanks to a generous outpouring of support from donors across the country, AmeriCares provided \$11 million in medicines, medical supplies and other disaster relief within the first year after Hurricane Katrina. We also provided \$12.3 million in grants to support health care initiatives and other community rebuilding projects to aid people in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

## Building Lasting Partnerships Across the U.S.

Our disaster relief work along the Gulf Coast enabled us to build upon our experience in the region and expand programs that help increase access to health services across the United States.

AmeriCares delivers ongoing shipments of medicines and medical supplies to a network of more than 200 health care partners serving uninsured and underinsured Americans; and our Patient Assistance Program provides free prescription medications, including medicines for people living with chronic conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension. Since 2005, we have delivered more than \$105 million in medical assistance throughout the country. As demand for health services grows and clinic resources shrink, AmeriCares will continue its deliveries of aid right here at home.

## Responding to the Oil Spill

AmeriCares relationships with community-based health care groups in Louisiana and Mississippi have served as a foundation for our oil spill relief efforts. Since the April 20 disaster, AmeriCares has delivered more than \$270,000 worth of medicines and supplies to 11 Gulf Coast clinics serving the poor and uninsured, including the Biloxi clinic.

Today, the economic damage to three major industries – oil, tourism and fishing – from the recession and oil spill disaster, compounded by the losses from Hurricane Katrina, has added another burden to people who fight daily for economic survival. The need for mental health services spike in the aftermath of major crises.

“Mental illness is a silent killer and contributes to serious loss of life due to suicide, domestic violence and substance abuse,” AmeriCares Medical Director, Dr. Frank Bia, said. “Combine psychological trauma and emotional stress with untreated chronic health conditions, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, and the consequences of lost access to primary health care multiply.”



Photo by Matthew McDermott

**The Johnsons are among the many people AmeriCares helps with deliveries of medicines to health clinics along the Gulf Coast in response to the oil spill.**

## AmeriCares Commitment Here at Home

Health care access remains a focus of AmeriCares work across the U.S. Since many families do not have health insurance to pay for primary or specialty care, including mental health services, AmeriCares is funding mental health assessments and counseling to help identify and treat anxiety and depression, as well as increasing deliveries of mental health medicines. As long as there are people in need in the U.S., AmeriCares will continue its deliveries of medicines, medical supplies and support services.

## AmeriCares Hurricane Katrina Program Highlights

At the five-year mark, AmeriCares impact on communities across the Gulf Coast is tangible and lasting. The care and generosity of our donors is reflected in this cross section of programs that have made a difference in helping communities rebuild:

2010

### Coastal Family Clinic in Biloxi, MS

AmeriCares is funding a project for enhanced patient access to care by providing extended hours, improved patient services and expanded diagnostic testing for patients who cannot afford such tests.



Photo by Chef Gordon

### Manna Ministries in Picayune, MS

AmeriCares is helping to increase the capacity for this free medical clinic which serves low-income, uninsured people in the community. Through our support, the clinic will be able to extend clinic hours, increase its medical supplies and expand laboratory testing.



Photo by Matthew McDermott

2008-2009



Photo courtesy of GNO Immunization Network

### Back to School Vaccinations

To help provide children with immunizations against childhood and other infectious diseases, AmeriCares donated a mobile medical unit to the Children's Hospital of New Orleans. The mobile medical unit helps support a free vaccine program throughout New Orleans in collaboration with local hospitals and community groups.



Photo by Martha Farnsworth

2006-2007

### Dental Care in Mississippi

In the second half of 2006, AmeriCares funded the purchase of a mobile dental clinic for Coastal Family Health Services, which operates out of Biloxi. In 2007, this mobile clinic operated five days a week and treated more than 3,500 people with dental needs, many of whom lacked health insurance.



Photo courtesy of CFHC

### Supporting Young People in New Orleans, LA

Covenant House was one of the few organizations dealing with the mental health challenges for young people in New Orleans, LA; AmeriCares helped support staffing needs for this critically needed service.

### A New Home for Child Care in Biloxi, MS

Moore Community House, which provides many services to Biloxi's poorest neighborhoods, including day care and other children's services, lost many of their buildings in the hurricane. With the support of AmeriCares, Moore was able to find interim space and return to providing child care in January 2007.

2005-2006



Photo by AmeriCares/Fletcher Watton

### Child Care in Pass Christian, MS

One of the communities that lost its entire infrastructure was Pass Christian, MS. AmeriCares donated two temporary structures used to store essential building supplies for community groups helping to rebuild and repair houses.

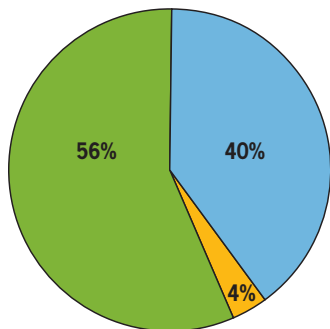


Photo by AmeriCares/Tom Turley

### Building a Playground in New Orleans and Mississippi

On a sweltering June day in New Orleans, more than 200 volunteers came together to build a new playground, restoring children's laughter to a neighborhood decimated by Hurricane Katrina. It was the first of three AmeriCares projects with KaBoom!, a nonprofit that focuses on building great places for children to play.

## AmeriCares Hurricane Katrina Grant Support



Hurricane Katrina Grants  
5 Year Total: \$12,392,429

- Civic & Community Programs: \$4,942,138
- Education: \$500,000
- Health & Human Services: \$6,950,291



Photo by AmeriCares/Michael Sofronski