

# Chile Earthquake: One Year Later

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## PROGRESS MADE SINCE THE FEBRUARY 27, 2010 EARTHQUAKE ● FEBRUARY 2011

*The purpose of this report is to provide an update of activities and accomplishments on Direct Relief International's response efforts related to the magnitude-8.8 earthquake that hit Chile on February 27, 2010.*

*The quake was the fifth largest in the world since 1900. It left 500 people dead, approximately a million and a half people homeless, and nearly 200,000 homes destroyed. Chile's Minister of Health, Dr. Jaime Mañalich Muxi, reported that 25% of the country's hospital beds – 6,500 of 26,000 – were damaged by the quake.*

Since the quake, Direct Relief has provided approximately \$620,500 (wholesale) worth of medical and surgical supplies, nutritional products, personal care items, and blankets to Chilean healthcare providers. These items were generously donated by some of the world's most prominent healthcare companies such as 3M, Abbott, GlaxoSmithKline, Miltex, and Covidien. In addition to providing critical medical supplies, Direct Relief has also awarded over \$95,000 in cash grants to help rebuild the capacity of Chilean healthcare facilities that were damaged by the earthquake.



*Staff from FEDES unload a shipment of medical supplies from Direct Relief.*

## APPROPRIATE AID WHERE IT IS NEEDED MOST

Immediately after the earthquake, Direct Relief initiated contact with in-country healthcare partners to identify their medical resources needs. Direct Relief worked with pharmaceutical and medical supply companies to obtain critically requested items.

Because of Chile's established healthcare system and infrastructure, they were able to meet most pharmaceutical needs. However, Direct Relief provided medical supplies, personal care items, and nutritional products to enhance relief efforts and worked with the Chilean Ministry of Health to identify

and fill shortages of specific medications. Throughout the year following the earthquake, Direct Relief also continued to distribute medicines to help replenish the Ministry's depleted stocks.

As a result of the quake, Direct Relief developed a strong partnership with FEDES (*Fundación Educativa de Desarrollo Económico y Social*), a Chilean non-governmental organization. FEDES' history of collaboration with Chilean healthcare centers and government authorities greatly facilitated the efficient distribution of the donated materials to where they were needed. The Minister of Health assigned a committee to create a protocol for the distribution of donated resources and then instituted measures to vastly reduce the complexity involved in the importation of emergency provisions during the weeks and months following the disaster.

FedEx contributed to the success of the emergency response efforts by airlifting critically needed supplies from Direct Relief to FEDES free of charge. Aid delivery to health facilities in the most affected areas was then initiated in coordination with national and local authorities, hospital directors, and primary healthcare networks. Direct Relief sent a total of 57 pallets of medical materials in response to the earthquake, worth over \$620,500 (wholesale). In addition to material aid, Direct Relief also provided FEDES with a \$10,000 cash grant to cover the organization's expenses in distributing the aid. This enabled the distribution of medical materials to hard-to-reach healthcare facilities in need.

**"The aid received was very appropriate. The supplies were suitable to the need and arrived to the affected families in a timely manner. The donated medications were in excellent condition and were still far from their expiration date. Local authorities particularly appreciated and highlighted this last point, as often when medication arrives it is already close to its expiration date or has even already expired."**

*Steven Colon  
President, FEDES  
(Fundación Educativa de Desarrollo Económico y Social)*



*Reconstructing clinic property walls that were destroyed during the earthquake.*

## REPAIRING AND RECONSTRUCTING PRIMARY HEALTH CENTERS

Direct Relief provided a \$85,290 cash grant to FEDES to fund construction and repair of nine damaged health center sites in Santiago. Prior to the earthquake, these establishments served 80,000 people monthly. The quake damaged brickwork, roofing, water and sewage systems, electric systems, perimeter walls and fencing, and windows. Since support from Direct Relief was received, a wide variety of infrastructural repairs and replacements have been made at the clinics, including the restoration of electrical systems, lighting, natural gas, and plumbing, the replacement of windows and furniture, and the rebuilding of walls and fences that were destroyed in the earthquake. Reconstruction is currently complete at four centers and is expected to be completed at all nine by March 3<sup>1</sup>, 2011. At multiple clinics, staff and community members have volunteered their time to help in reconstruction and clean-

up, which has boosted the morale and confidence of the health centers' employees, patients, and local community members.

In addition to the pre-selected nine health centers, FEDES identified a critical need of medical equipment at health centers in Lo Espejo, one of the poorest districts in Santiago. FEDES delivered medical supplies and equipment sent by Direct Relief to health centers in Lo Espejo and used Direct Relief's cash grant to purchase critical items that were not donated. The cash grant was also used for clinic reconstruction and to fix a desperately needed ambulance that was damaged in the earthquake.



**“Many authorities and public figures expressed their gratitude and recognition of our work. The hope, joy, the feeling of companionship in their pain felt by hundreds of thousands of families is something we cannot translate into statistics or other objective measures.”**

*Steven Colon  
President, FEDES  
(Fundación Educativa de Desarrollo  
Economico y Social)*

*Children displaced by the earthquake receive blankets donated by Direct Relief and distributed by FEDES.*

## LOOKING AHEAD

As with all emergency response activities, Direct Relief continues to provide medical and technical support to their in-country partners to strengthen their capacity long after the immediate effects of the disaster end. Though the earthquake hit Chile 12 months ago, many healthcare facilities remain damaged and the need for medical supplies and equipment is unrelenting.

Direct Relief will maintain the established partnerships with the Chilean Ministry of Health, FEDES, corporate donors, and other relief organizations assisting the people of Chile, and will continue to deliver medical resources based on identified needs. Direct Relief has already facilitated the introduction of healthcare company affiliates in Chile with on-the-ground partners, thereby contributing to the long-term partnerships needed to help rebuild the country's healthcare infrastructure and sustain these efforts into the future.

Direct Relief is continuing to support in-country partners in Chile and is committed to infusing additional medical resources into areas most affected by the quake.