

Earthquake in Chile: 6-Months Later

A Report on Direct Relief International's Response Efforts

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update of activities and accomplishments to date on Direct Relief International's response efforts related to magnitude-8.8 earthquake that hit Chile on February 27, 2010. The quake was the fifth largest in the world since 1900, and although the death toll was relatively low (about 500), approximately a million and a half people were rendered homeless. The *International Organization for Migration* estimates that about 200,000 homes were destroyed, and many others damaged.

In a letter from Chile's new Minister of Health, Dr. Jaime Mañalich Muxi, the Chilean public health system consists of 180 health facilities of varying levels throughout the country, for a total bed capacity of 26,000, of which 6,500 were rendered out of service due to structural damages caused by the quake.

Since the quake, Direct Relief has provided approximately \$535,000 of medical/surgical supplies, nutritional products, personal care items, and blankets to Chilean healthcare providers. In addition, Direct Relief has granted over \$95,000 in cash grants to help rebuild the capacity of in-country partners.

Immediate Response

Sending Only What Is Needed: Immediately after the earthquake, Direct Relief began contact with healthcare partners to identify their needs. Direct Relief worked with pharmaceutical companies to obtain necessary and requested supplies.

As the most economically developed country in South America, Chile has an established and robust pharmaceutical industry which was initially able to fulfill most of the country's needs for medicines after this devastating quake. As a result, Direct Relief provided medical supplies, personal care items, and nutritional products in the immediate term to enhance these efforts.

However, through direct requests from the Chilean Ministry of Health's (MOH) chief pharmacist, some shortages of specific medications were subsequently identified and were fulfilled through donations by Direct Relief's healthcare company partners. Direct Relief continues to work to provide medicines needed by the Ministry of Health in order to backfill the Ministry's stocks of depleted medical materials.



Staff from partner FEDES sort medical products received from Direct Relief International.

In addition to working directly with the MOH, Direct Relief developed a strong relationship with FEDES (Fundación Educativa de Desarrollo Economico y Social), a local Chilean non-profit group. Direct Relief's first shipment of relief supplies to Chile, courtesy of FedEx, was sent via air freight to FEDES which received and distributed the contents of the 17 pallets to public hospitals located within the affected regions. Most of these facilities suffered extensive damage as a result of the quake. Some had to be completely abandoned, and many had to establish temporary tent hospitals outside their main facilities in order to continue to provide medical services. Many of these tent hospitals are still functioning and attending to patients.



FEDES distributes nutritional products to Chilean people affected by the quake that were received from Direct Relief International.

Supplementing Supply Chain with Cash Grant: In addition to delivering medications and medical supplies to in-country partners, Direct Relief also provided two cash grants to FEDES to help them rebuild their infrastructure that was strained during the response efforts.

1. *Enhance logistics (\$10,080): To fund the transport and distribution of medical supplies to facilities in earthquake-affected areas that provide assistance for various health-related needs.* Since the earthquake, FEDES has conducted several distributions of humanitarian aid to affected regions. This grant will allow FEDES to continue filling the gap for crucial medicines and supplies through three main objectives: (1) transport and distribute donations of needed medicines, supplies, and equipment, (2) supervise the distribution of these items (including those donated by Direct Relief), and (3) encourage hope for the devastated people and communities
2. *Repair health center sites (\$85,290): To fund four months of construction and repair for nine damaged sites that provide assistance to people for their health-related needs.* The earthquake destroyed or severely damaged several buildings as well as the furniture and equipment in these facilities. The quake damaged brickwork, roofing, water and sewage systems, electric systems, perimeter walls and fencing, and windows. The conditions of these structures cause them to be dangerous for patients and staff, unsanitary, and vulnerable to looting. Prior to the earthquake, these establishments served 80,000 people monthly. The inability to immediately repair them has affected the quality of life for the most vulnerable populations in the district of Cerro Navia.

“The devastation is incredible and the need great, everyday I’m more thankful for people like you. Thanks for all that you are doing.”

- Steven Colon, Project Manager,
FEDES (Fundación Educativa de Desarrollo Economico y Social)

Looking Ahead

As with all of disaster responses, Direct Relief will continue to provide material support with in-country partners to strengthen their capacity after the disaster ends. Though the earthquake hit Chile six months ago, thousands of people are still living in tents, health care facilities are still damaged, and the need to reestablish quality health care services remains.

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. In addition, Direct Relief has facilitated the introduction between 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 continues to support in-country partners in Chile, and are committed to infusing additional medical resources into the areas affected by the quake.



Direct Relief prepares the next shipment to partners in Chile.