

Venezuela earthquake health response enters early recovery phase as focus shifts to restoring essential health services

Washington, D.C., 14 July 2026 (PAHO) – Nearly three weeks after the devastating earthquakes struck Venezuela on 24 June, the health response is entering a critical early recovery phase focused on restoring essential health services, strengthening referral networks and preventing secondary public health emergencies, according to PAHO's latest [Situation Report](#), which provides an overview of the evolving response, and the Organization's accompanying [Public Health Situation Analysis of Venezuela](#).

According to the Situation Report, the earthquakes have claimed 4,333 lives, left 16,740 people injured, displaced 17,907 people and damaged 38 health facilities. While emergency medical care and rapid assessments helped save lives in the immediate aftermath, the priority is now shifting to restoring health services, rehabilitating damaged facilities and ensuring people continue to receive essential care as recovery begins.

PAHO response

As the response transitions into this new phase, PAHO continues to support the Ministry of Health, including through technical cooperation and the coordination of the Health Cluster, which brings together 110 organizations involved in the health response and is co-led by PAHO and the International Rescue Committee.

Seven specialists from PAHO/WHO's Regional and Global Response Teams have joined the Organization's office in Caracas, providing expertise in emergency coordination, epidemiological surveillance, logistics, information management, Emergency Medical Team (EMT) coordination, health facility assessments and risk communication.

Through the Ministry of Health-led Coordination Cell (CICOM), supported by PAHO, 17 international Emergency Medical Teams are operating across the affected areas. To date, these teams have treated 8,489 people and performed 148 surgeries. As demand for emergency trauma care declines, the teams are increasingly supporting primary health care, rehabilitation and community-based services, helping restore referral pathways and continuity of care.

Public health situation and early recovery

The Public Health Situation Analysis highlights the main health risks expected over the coming three months and is helping guide priorities for surveillance, vaccination, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions, and continuity of care. Displacement, overcrowding and disruptions to essential services increase the risk of diarrheal and respiratory diseases, vector-borne and vaccine-preventable diseases, while also exacerbating malnutrition, maternal health complications and mental health needs.

To strengthen early detection and rapid response, national authorities have designated 18 priority diseases and public health events for immediate notification. PAHO field teams have also conducted epidemiological assessments in nine temporary shelters in La Guaira, integrating disease surveillance with infection prevention and control, vaccination, WASH activities and rapid outbreak response. The assessments have also identified broader health needs, including mental health support, nutrition screening and continuity of care for people living with chronic diseases and pregnant women.

Vaccination remains a critical component of the recovery, helping reduce the risk of outbreaks among displaced populations and affected communities. More than 24,406 vaccine doses have been administered across the affected states, including tetanus-diphtheria, yellow fever and other priority vaccines. PAHO is working with national authorities to strengthen immunization planning, cold chain management and vaccination strategies to sustain coverage during the recovery phase.

Maintaining access to medicines and essential medical supplies is equally critical to restoring health services. PAHO has already delivered six metric tons of emergency medical supplies, including trauma and emergency surgery kits, chronic disease medicines and essential medical equipment, to hospitals and primary health care services. A further 27.5 metric tons of humanitarian supplies are now being deployed, including Interagency Emergency Health Kits capable of supporting primary health care for approximately 200,000 people over three months, alongside trauma and emergency surgery kits, orthopedic supplies and treatment kits for severe acute malnutrition.

Mental health and psychosocial support remain an integral part of the response as communities begin to recover from the disaster. PAHO is working with national authorities to strengthen services through technical guidance, standardized protocols, Psychological First Aid and training for frontline health workers, particularly in the most affected communities and temporary shelters.

The Situation Report notes that, while significant progress has been made, substantial needs remain. Continued efforts are required to restore the continuity of essential health services, strengthen referral networks and hospital resilience, expand rehabilitation and mental health services, improve water, sanitation and hygiene in temporary shelters, sustain disease

surveillance and vaccination activities, and ensure continued access to care for people living with chronic diseases, pregnant women, children and other vulnerable groups.

As the response moves beyond the immediate emergency, maintaining access to essential health services will remain central to protecting the health of affected communities. PAHO will continue working alongside the Ministry of Health and partners to strengthen national capacities and support a recovery that not only restores health services but also strengthens the resilience of the health system for the future.

Links

[Situation Report No. 5 - Earthquakes in Venezuela](#)

[Public health situation analysis of Venezuela](#)

[PAHO response to the 2026 Venezuela earthquakes](#)

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The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its population. Founded in 1902, it is the world's oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of WHO for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system (OAS).

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