

Mobilizing Communities in Puerto Rico to Meet the Needs of Vulnerable Populations Before, During and After a Natural Disaster

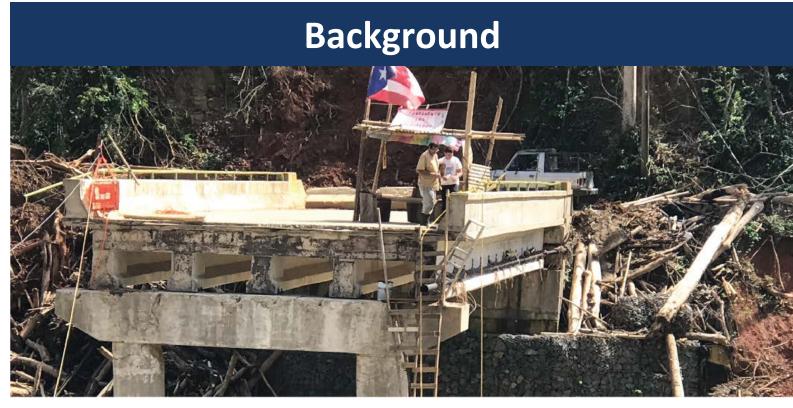


Project Team

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About Migrant Clinicians Network

MCN is a force for health justice, creating practical solutions at the intersection of vulnerability, migration, and health. We develop clinical and patient programs and resources and provide bridge case management, technical assistance and continuing education to clinicians, community health centers and other health care delivery sites. We aim to improve the quality of health care and reduce disparities for immigrants and other underserved vulnerable populations. MCN has a long history of partnering with Puerto Rico's community health centers and regional and community organizations to address environmental health, worker health and safety, infectious diseases, emergency preparedness and immunizations. Our Puerto Rican office focuses on health and equity with an emphasis on addressing the impact of climate change.



Hurricane Maria wiped away this bridge, completely cutting off a small community nestled in the mountains of Puerto Rico.

In 2017, Puerto Rico was hit by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, causing approximately 2,975 excess deaths and leaving most of the Island's infrastructure destroyed. The hurricanes strained the Puerto Rican healthcare system in ways that were unforeseen prior to the disaster, compounding and amplifying deep-seated problems. The crisis also underscored the resiliency of many communities in their fight to survive and rebuild. The CHCs served as a lifeline and became a central hub of immediate aid and continue to play a critical role in long-term recovery. Building on this role to foster the community's ability to prepare and respond to future events is critical given the population's susceptibility to hazards and impacts of climate change. The overarching goal of this project is to build capacity among health centers to employ a community mobilization framework for emergency preparedness in order to improve health outcomes of vulnerable populations before, during and after a disaster.

Community Mobilization Approach



CSM went door-to-door checking on their patients after Hurricane Maria. Community mobilization employs a cross-sectoral, community-based, participatory approach to address health, social, or environmental issues, empowering individuals and groups to take action to facilitate change, including policy change. This model has been utilized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization to successfully tackle specific diseases or community health concerns in the US and internationally.

Project Overview

Problem: Recent hurricanes in Puerto Rico exposed systemic problems and challenges in meeting basic healthcare needs of vulnerable populations, particularly those with chronic disease or mental health conditions.

Vision: Community Health Centers (CHCs) in Puerto Rico will incorporate a community mobilization approach to emergency preparedness; that fosters a resilient community with skills and knowledge to prepare for, and to remain safe, during and after a disaster.

Funding received

Communication

Inputs

technology platform + video conferencing

+ telecommunication

- Bilingual/bicultural staff

Subject area experts

WHO, PAHO, and CDC

tools and resources

Puerto Rico CHCs

In-person meeting costs

Activities

Prepare to mobilize

- + SWOT Analysis + Strategic teams
- + Adapt tools + Community Assessment

Evaluate

Disseminate

for action

Scale up and spread to additional 6 communities

Organize pilot communities

Plan for Emergency **Preparedness and Response**

> + Planning sessions + Create community emergency preparedness

mplement and monitor emergency preparedness mobilization plan

mobilization plans

Outputs

Participation Engaged CHCs

Strategic teams

ECHO Sessions

Community assessments completed

In-person trainings

Completed community disaster preparedness plans

Community-building

Monitoring visits

Streamline articles

Blog posts

Presentations Attendees at dissemination

meetings and presentations

Outcomes - Impact

Short

At least 75% of participating CHCs have a clear understanding of their resources, strengths, limitations and capacity to respond during a disaster.

CHC personnel report increased self-efficacy and knowledge regarding their ability to address the needs of vulnerable populations before, during and after a disaster.

CHC personnel show increased capacity to plan for the needs of vulnerable populations in a disaster

CHCs across Puerto Rico and the United States have access to resources to address the needs of vulnerable populations in a disaster.

Medium

At least 75% of participating CHCs develop and institutionalize emergency preparedness plans that fully encompass their resources, strengths, limitations and capacity to respond during a disaster.

At least 75% of participating CHCs incorporate into their clinical system a way to identify vulnerable patients in order to support emergency preparedness.

Community mobilization results in strengthened linkages within and outside of communities to meet the needs of vulnerable populations before, during and after a disaster.

Partnering with Community Health Centers



Our CSM partners discuss resource mapping as one of our project key activities.

In project year 1, MCN is partnering with two community health centers, Hospital General Castañer (HGC) and Corporación de Servicios Médicos (CSM), along with the communities they serve, to develop and pilot this initiative. HGC serves several rural, agricultural communities in the mountains of central Puerto Rico including Castañer, Adjuntas and Jayuya. CSM serves several of the island's northern towns including Hatillo, Arecibo, Utuado and Aguadilla. Many of these communities were hardest hit by Hurricane Maria. The vast majority of patients served by these health centers are Hispanic and live at or below the federal poverty line.

In project year 2, MCN plans to partner with additional community health centers.



Activities



















Long

In the event of a disaster.

will have the tools and

communities in Puerto Rico

resources, knowledge and

plans to address the needs

of all community members.

Year 1: Pilot project with two community health centers Year 2: Spread to additional community health centers

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Evaluate the risk of a natural disaster affecting the CHC.

Evaluate the risk of a natural disaster affecting the community.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS (SWOT)

Analyze current emergency management and preparedness strategies in the CHCs Emergency Management Plan

Analyze how target communities fit within the CHC's **Emergency Management Plan**

RESOURCES AND SYSTEM MAPPING

Identify resources available to the community and the CHC to address and sustain emergency management activities

EMERGENCY PLANS

Draft Community Emergency Management Plan

Integrate the Community Emergency Management Plan with the CHC Emergency Management Plan

Connect with MCN

www.migrantclinician.org | (512) 327-2017







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