

FEMA Obligates Nearly \$89 Million to Rebuild the Island's Hospitals

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – To date, FEMA has obligated nearly \$89 million to repair and rebuild hospitals and health centers across the island. Over half of these funds are for permanent work for 258 facilities that will benefit the communities and residents they serve.

The federal investment in the local healthcare sector is key to ensuring resiliency for years to come. Funds for architectural and engineering design costs, which help reduce the “damage-rebuild-damage” cycle that comes with restoring structures to pre-disaster conditions, are part of these permanent work project obligations.

“With the complex health situation we are currently facing, these obligations for the island’s hospitals have taken on a different meaning. These projects will not only address hurricane-related damage, they are part of a much bigger picture of ensuring residents have resilient infrastructure in place that is able to provide the support they need during challenging times,” said Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Alex Amparo.

Working closely with the Central Office of Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience, or COR3, FEMA’s efforts are focused on approving funds to help communities recover.

“As we continue to undertake more recovery and reconstruction projects, we have recognized that this process meets the needs of all the sectors while treating them with an equal level of importance. These obligations of funds towards the improvement of healthcare facilities are more relevant nowadays while we are facing the current medical emergency. It is of the utmost importance that COR3 continues to work together with FEMA and the subrecipients to move recovery forward while pursuing a positive impact in every area,” said the Executive Director of COR3, Ottmar Chávez.



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The obligations for the healthcare sector include grants for the Puerto Rico Department of Health's network of hospitals, with over \$1 million for repairs to the community health center in Lajas, known locally as a CDT. These consist of repairing essential building components like roof drains and pipes, lighting fixtures, floors and the facility's refrigeration system. Over \$117,000 of the funds will be used to mitigate damage in the future and includes adding a secondary drainage system and surge protection for several water pumps at the facility.

FEMA's multimillion-dollar obligations also include funds for architectural and engineering design costs. The University Pediatric Hospital in San Juan, for example, was awarded more than \$226,000 to repair its pediatric and medical school facilities. Likewise, the Hospital Universitario Ramón Ruiz in Bayamón received an obligation of nearly \$380,000 for its pediatric care unit, medicine storage facilities, X-Ray room, radiology clinic, immunization clinic and emergency rooms, among others.

In addition, the Hospital Auxilio Mutuo in Hato Rey, one of the largest cancer treatment and research facilities in the Caribbean, was approved for \$77,500 to address repairs to its facilities that treat patients living with this condition.

"These obligations awarded to our hospitals allow them to better perform their daily operations and repair structures that sustained damage, so they can continue providing services to their patients. Considering that we are currently facing a healthcare crisis, these funds are even more important because it allows hospitals to care for their patients more efficiently," said the Executive President of the Puerto Rico Hospitals Association, Jaime Plá.

The residents of Adjuntas, Las Marías, Maricao and Yauco will also benefit from a grant of roughly \$30,000 to repair the heliport at the Castañer General Hospital in Lares. This structure was critical during the Hurricane María emergency given that it allowed help to reach the more than 150,000 people living in the region that were isolated when roadways were affected in these communities.

"We are the only medical facility in this region equipped with a heliport, which is critical during life-threatening emergencies. When patients are afflicted with a life-or-death illness, having a heliport is critical to transport them to a larger medical facility where they can receive the specialized care needed to save their lives," said the Chief Financial Officer for the Castañer General Hospital, Guillermo J.



Jiménez Ramos.

FEMA and COR3 continue to work together to develop strategies that advance recovery projects. To date, over \$6.6 billion has been approved for Puerto Rico under FEMA's Public Assistance program.

For more information on Puerto Rico's recovery after Hurricane María, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339 and recovery.pr. You can also follow FEMA's and COR3's social networks on Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and Twitter@COR3pr.

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