

## For Survivors, Health Services Restored and Strengthened

On April 25, 2015, a powerful magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck Nepal, killing nearly 9,000 people, injuring tens of thousands more, wrecking homes and roads, and damaging or destroying more than 1,200 health centers.

To help survivors and strengthen Nepal's battered health system, Americares applied our expertise in disaster response; health service delivery and restoration; and capacity building, particularly in areas of mental health and disaster risk reduction. With support from our network of generous donors, Americares has provided over \$27 million in emergency medicine and project support.

After the earthquake struck Nepal, Americares set two response and recovery goals and we continue to focus our work around them:

- 1. Restore health services and strengthen health systems in affected communities.**
- 2. Provide and add capacity for mental health and psychosocial support among health workers and survivors.**

While Americares work has improved lives in over 100 communities, there is a dire need for continued investment. Two years after the earthquake, many health facilities are still in need of repair, and there is an ongoing need for maternal and child health and disease prevention programs for vulnerable populations, especially those in remote, isolated communities. Further, to prevent such a terrible loss of life in the next disaster, health facilities need to be strengthened and health care providers trained to respond effectively.

Americares is a registered international non-governmental organization in Nepal and maintains close relationships with



At health centers rebuilt by Americares after the earthquake, health workers (in blue) find employment and entire communities gain access to the services they need.

the Ministry of Health, national and international NGOs, donor agencies, community-based organizations, district-level officials and private sector partners.

**\$27 million**  
**total aid**



Americares used government guidelines and local engineers to ensure strong, resilient new health centers.

**"We are really grateful to Americares, who came to Nepal in such a difficult time and provided us meaningful support in the reconstruction of health facility buildings in Makwanpur and Dhading districts, which resulted in uninterrupted delivery of quality health services to people in rural villages."**

– Dr. Senendra Raj Upreti, Health Secretary, Nepal Ministry of Health

### Americares four global programs areas

-  Emergency response
-  Access to medicine
-  Clinical services
-  Community health

## 1. Restore and strengthen health systems and build resilience in affected communities

To restore health services in communities hit hard by the earthquake, AmeriCares is rebuilding and repairing 16 health facilities in Dhading and Makwanpur districts. Working with two local NGO partners and in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, AmeriCares is building the health centers to the construction guidelines set by the Government of Nepal. AmeriCares is also providing essential medical equipment and supplies, according to government guidelines. Six reconstructed facilities are open and serving patients.

- \* Rebuilding 16 health facilities in all: seven facilities in Makwanpur and nine in Dhading;
- \* Together, providing care for 195,000 patients;
- \* Collaborating with local partners Birat Nepal Medical Trust, Himalayan Health Care and, on an evaluation of the program, Social Science Baha.



When actors show how stress from the earthquake can appear in people's lives, everyone pays attention and learns.

In Makwanpur, AmeriCares is further strengthening the health system by providing training for health workers and community members in areas such as water, sanitation and hygiene; mental health and psychosocial services; and disaster risk reduction.

# 195,000

people benefit

"I appreciate from my heart the donors who helped build this health post. This health post is much better than the previous one—it is better equipped and has more health workers."

— patient and shopkeeper Murali Adhikari in Nibuwatar, Makwanpur



Before AmeriCares rebuilt this health center in Nibuwatar, patients had to travel long distances to access even the most basic health services.



## 2. Provide and add capacity for mental health and psychosocial support among health workers and survivors.

To give survivors the tools they need to address damaging stress in their communities, Amicares collaborated on the design and implementation of a unique psychosocial and mental health program. The program is a drama-based forum theater: Trained actors show the ways stress from the earthquake can affect an individual, family and community, increasing awareness of and destigmatizing mental health issues in the audience. Local health volunteers circulate; they have been trained prior to the drama and answer questions and facilitate conversation. Amicares is monitoring and evaluating the program, so it can be replicated in future disasters.

\* Reaching six districts (Dhading, Dolakha, Gorkha, Kavre, Nuwakot and Sindhupalchowk) including 188 village development committees—187 within two years of the earthquake;

\* 2,600 community health volunteers and auxiliary nurse midwives trained;

\* 889 theater events performed;

\* 480,600 people have attended a performance;

\* Collaborating with partners Centre for Victims of Torture Nepal, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization, IsraAID and, on a project evaluation, Social Science Baha.

**2,600**  
health workers  
trained



Jamuna Thapa (left) was becoming depressed after the earthquake. Amicares program helped her—and showed her how to help her neighbors.

### Now She Can Help Others

For Jamuna, the 2015 earthquake didn't end on April 25 – or even months later, when the aftershocks finally stopped shaking her house in Patlekhet. It seemed she was constantly reliving the terror of the big quake, when cell phone service was disrupted and she couldn't contact her adult children. "I already suffer from hypertension and thought I was going to have a heart attack," she says.

Jamuna works as a community health volunteer and when her local health center offered training in psychosocial support, Jamuna signed up. In the training, she learned how stress can appear—as depression, domestic abuse, heavy drinking and more. When actors came to Patlekhet to dramatize these behaviors in a theater forum, Jamuna encouraged discussion among her neighbors and her own anxiety eased. "These programs provide a platform for people dealing with mental issues to understand and share their problems," she says. "Facilitating the program has helped me to heal as well. I realize that sitting together and sharing one's trauma, emotional distress and experiences helps release stress and lessen the pain."

**"Amicares support has contributed to the reduction of stigma and discrimination against mentally ill people to a considerable extent; it has also enhanced the capacity of grassroots-level health workers and community health volunteers in mental health and counseling. We are grateful to Amicares for such generous support at a crucial time when mental health was a burning issue due to the devastating earthquake two years ago."**

– Ram Chandra Pathak, Chief, District Health Office, Makwanpur

**480,000**  
people reached



Meet Jamuna and see the mental health program here: [amicares.org/Nepal2](http://amicares.org/Nepal2)

## Immediate Response

**Aid shipments:** Within 10 days of the earthquake, AmeriCares had supplied 25 international and local partners with more than \$20 million in aid to meet survivors' immediate and longer-term health needs as defined by Nepal's Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization.

**Medical teams:** Beginning two days after the disaster, AmeriCares own teams of doctors and health workers went into heavily damaged districts to treat thousands of ill and injured survivors. AmeriCares also supported a team of doctors from NYC Medics with logistics, funding and more than a ton of medicine and medical supplies to bring health care to communities accessible only by helicopter.

**Support for health workers:** To address their mental health needs, AmeriCares provided counseling and



For injured survivors in remote communities, AmeriCares medical teams provided critical care in the weeks after the earthquake. Photo by Matthew McDermott



Within 10 days of the earthquake, an AmeriCares airlift of critical medicine and supplies arrived in Nepal.

training to 800 health workers in the hardest-hit communities.

**Airlift for fuel crisis:** When tensions along the border with India created fuel and other shortages just five months after the earthquake, AmeriCares airlifted \$1.2 million in medicine and supplies into Nepal, working with the World Health Organization to fill urgent needs in the health system.

**Increase capacity for rehabilitation:** AmeriCares built and operated a 20-bed injury and rehabilitation center in partnership with the International Organization for Migration to increase access to long-term rehabilitation services. The center cared for patients, trained 44 health staff and created a five-part tool kit so this project can be replicated by other groups in future disasters.



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AmeriCares is a health-focused relief and development organization that responds to people affected by poverty or disaster with life-changing health programs, medicine and medical supplies. Each year, AmeriCares reaches more than 90 countries and all 50 U.S. states with over \$600 million in innovative health programs and quality medical aid. AmeriCares is the world's leading nonprofit provider of donated medicine and medical supplies. Since it was established nearly 40 years ago, AmeriCares has provided more than \$13 billion in aid to 164 countries, including the United States. AmeriCares has offices in the United States, El Salvador, India, Liberia, Nepal, the Philippines and Tanzania.

AmeriCares responds to an average of 30 natural disasters and humanitarian crises worldwide each year, establishes long-term recovery projects and brings disaster preparedness programs to vulnerable communities. AmeriCares relief workers are among the first to respond to emergencies and stay as long as needed, helping to restore health services for survivors.

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