



# National Medical Association

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Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for the outpouring of support and your expressed desire to go to Haiti. The national office staff and I have just completed a conference call with the White House. They have indicated the need for precautions at this time. Because of the disruption in infrastructure, Haiti has very limited capacity to handle an influx of rescue and recovery workers on the ground. **We are told that individuals and organizations should not attempt self-deployment** (i.e., planning a mission to Haiti independent of the coordinated U.S. government response is not wise, at this time). There could be significant challenges landing on the island (there are no commercial flights), as well as challenges in dealing with conditions on the ground for which the emergency response teams are trained (housing, food, coordination with other medical/public health entities).

The National Disaster Medical System and the Commissioned Corps (U.S. Public Health Service) have been activated and are ready to deploy as needed. The plan is to maximize the use of the U.S. government emergency medical and public health teams and NGOs/international aid organizations in Haiti in advance of non-U.S. government entities from within the U.S.

The airport is now operational but has finite capacity.

Monetary donations are the most critical need now to ensure that aid organizations/NGOs on the ground and the U.S. government have enough resources to meet demand. As motivated as people are to send resources other than money, individuals and organizations are discouraged from sending materials that are not asked for as it could pose health and safety hazards and there may not be storage capacity for these materials.

With respect to volunteering, donations, etc: **Individuals, organizations, and companies can go to the website organized by USAID - [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org). This website allows individuals/organizations to register and indicate what resources they have (e.g., health professionals or others wanting to volunteer in Haiti, monetary contributions, medical supplies).**

The NMA has been collecting the names and the availability of volunteers that have called or emailed into the National office. We will share this information with USAID as requested by the White House.

Federal agencies are conducting needs assessments and will use the list of registered individuals/organizations to meet those needs as possible. The site also includes a list of organizations to which you can donate money. Note: the website can get overloaded and operate slowly, so please be patient with that process.

We will continue to send updates as new information becomes available.

Sincerely,

Willarda V. Edwards, M.D., MBA  
President