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EMTs, Equipment and Experts Deployed to Haiti After 7.2 Magnitude Earthquake Kills Over 300

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PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — A team of experts from the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) office in Port au Prince has been deployed to evaluate damage and coordinate an appropriate health response following the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that shook Haiti on Saturday morning.

Latest reports from the Haiti Civil Protection Agency suggest that more than 300 people have been killed — a number which is expected to increase.

There are also reports of significant damage to health infrastructure, particularly in the southwest of the island, including in towns such as Les Cayes.

“Our hearts go out to the people of Haiti on this truly sad day,” said PAHO Director Dr. Carissa Etienne. “Our team of experts is on the ground and stands ready to assist in all aspects of health response.”

The team from PAHO is supporting coordination of health response alongside Haiti’s Ministry of Health, UN agencies, and other partners in order to assess immediate needs and ensure that support is provided quickly and efficiently.

PAHO is also preparing several Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs), as well as medical supplies and other strategic equipment that can be deployed if needed. EMTs are teams of health professionals that provide direct clinical care to people affected by emergencies and disasters.

PAHO and the World Health Organization has activated Incident Management Teams both at its Country Offices in Haiti and the Dominican Republic as well as its headquarters in Washington, DC, USA.

Experts are now concerned that the situation may escalate due to the increased risk of wind and rainfall that may be brought by Tropical Storm Grace, which is expected to reach Hispaniola, the island split between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, on Sunday.