The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) was incorporated in 1950 under Belgian law and has grown to be one of the most prominent and impactful convening, educational, and advocacy associations in the world, with over 230 members worldwide. IDF’s mission is to promote diabetes care prevention, with a long-term vision of living in a world without diabetes.

For over 70 years, Direct Relief has been a leading provider of humanitarian medical relief around the world. In times of emergency and crisis, whether it be via natural disasters, disease outbreaks, conflict, or political crisis – there is often the interruption of healthcare services and lack of access to products that are critical to effectively treat the impacted population.

BACKGROUND

According to latest Diabetes Atlas, the number of people worldwide with diabetes has risen to 463 million. As the global disease burden continues to shift from communicable to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), diabetes has emerged as a major contributor to death and disability worldwide, responsible for 4.2 million deaths in 2019. Fortunately, health complications related to diabetes can be minimized or often eliminated entirely through access to essential medicines and proper care, but this is often not the case for those in a country that is experiencing crisis or natural disaster.

HISTORY OF COLLABORATION

IDF and Direct Relief have a 10-year history of collaboration. The partnership began with the Life For A Child Program that is now run out of Diabetes New South Wales. The Program provides access to life-sustaining medication and monitoring to over 21,000 under-served children with type 1 diabetes in 42 countries. The supplies include insulin, needles & syringes, blood glucose meters & strips, and specialized diagnostic A1C equipment. This program has enabled children with diabetes in some of the world’s poorest countries to gain access to the medical products that sustain their lives.

Direct Relief and IDF began a pilot collaboration in 2019 to encourage healthcare manufacturers to donate diabetes related medical product to help address the gaps in diabetes care during times of emergency and or crisis situations. This collaboration has resulted in the donation of over 5 million tablets of oral diabetes medications, tens of thousands of vials of insulin, and diabetes related consumables to some of the most at-risk countries in the developing world that experienced natural disasters and or emergency crisis. Direct Relief distributed these medicines to the following countries that include: the Bahamas, Bolivia, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kurdistan, Malawi, North Korea, Syria, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.
NETWORK CAPABILITIES

Direct Relief is well positioned to collaborate with prominent regional and global associations and agencies in order to respond in the most timely and effective manner possible. These formal relationships include partnerships with PAHO (the Latin American Unit of the WHO), ASEAN’s AHA Center for Humanitarian Assistance, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, the NCD Alliance, as well as the large community health provider associations in the United States that represent over 10,000 clinical sites to assist 30 million Americans that lack insurance or access to healthcare. These associations and relationships enable Direct Relief to both pre-position product and respond to crisis situations in a very timely manner.

SHIPPING & LOGISTICS

Direct Relief works closely with all three global insulin manufacturers and is now the world’s largest provider of humanitarian insulin. Direct Relief’s facility has the refrigeration capacity to store specialty medicines (up to 300 pallets of cold-chain product) for distribution to over 100 countries around the world.

Temperature-sensitive medicines like insulin are shipped in specialized packaging that maintains a constant temperature range for up to 120 hours. To ensure and verify that temperature has been maintained throughout the transit process, temperature-data loggers are inserted into each package to record the internal temperature of the shipment, to be confirmed within range before the product is released for patient use.

REQUEST FOR COLLABORATION

IDF and Direct Relief invite healthcare companies that manufacture diabetes-related medicines, enabling technologies, and diagnostic products to support this program with consistent donations of their products, so that assistance can be provided to countries and regions impacted by emergency and disaster situations. IDF will help identify and work with its members in those affected regions that need support to ensure appropriate and rapid response.

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