

**October 2023**

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**Note from Elizabeth (EJ) Ashbourne, PQMD Executive Director**

Greetings from PQMD!

I am so inspired after returning from PQMD's Education Forum a couple weeks ago held in Santa Barbara, California, at Direct Relief's headquarters, our wonderful host and sponsor! PQMD members never cease to amaze me with their extraordinary expertise, passion, and willingness to share and collaborate to continuously improve the important work of providing humanitarian and disaster assistance around the world.



Our meeting focused on the topics of health systems strengthening, climate and health, supply chain, and sustainability and resilience through the lens of these turbulent times. We explored how evolution, and perhaps even some revolution, needs to happen to ensure that access to quality medicines and care remain a priority for the global health community, particularly in underserved communities and populations in crisis. PQMD members shared best practices and met in working groups to discuss complex aspects of these critical issues.

Along with the formal discussions, we had many opportunities to network and enjoy getting to know each other at our member dinner at the MOXI Museum and other social events throughout the week. Members were able to make connections that will help them as they continue to do the important work of providing donations and humanitarian assistance in response to the increasingly volatile global environment, including natural disasters, countries in conflict, and the growing climate-related disasters all over the world. We are currently working on a summary report which will be available in the coming weeks, so keep an eye out for that!

Also, a reminder that November is Guidelines Month at PQMD, and we will be celebrating key guidelines initiatives on social media during Guidelines Week November 6-10, so please keep an eye on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#), like and share our posts, and help us celebrate with these [shareable resources](#).

We send our thoughts out to our many colleagues who are currently in harm's way, and we hope for your continued safety.



## PQMD Holds Members-Only Education Forum in Santa Barbara, California, Hosted by Direct Relief

PQMD recently held its members-only 2023 Education Forum at Direct Relief's headquarters in Santa Barbara, California. The two-day event included sessions addressing health systems strengthening, climate and health, supply chain, and sustainability and resilience in efforts to promote access to quality healthcare. The format of the meeting provided ample time to discuss issues in workgroups and seek solutions to complex issues related to the topics. In addition, members participated in networking activities and social events to get to know each other better and find synergies and opportunities for partnership.

Members also had the opportunity to hear from our new members and tour Direct Relief's Warehouse. More information, including key takeaways from the sessions and working groups, will be included in a report to be released in the coming weeks.

If you attended the Education Forum and have not done so yet, please complete our [survey](#) about the event.



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## PQMD Holds Disaster All-Call to Discuss Response to Humanitarian Crisis in Israel and Gaza

In the month of October, PQMD held two member all-calls to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Israel and Gaza. On the first call, representatives from PQMD member organizations in the region shared the current needs in Israel and Gaza after the violent attacks on Israel on October 7th. The purpose of the second call was to share the current situation and member responses, discuss challenges and support disaster response coordination efforts. The current situation in Gaza is particularly dire as many supplies have still been unable to enter the region.

PQMD members also had an opportunity to discuss the crisis during an impromptu "open house" at the 2023 Education Forum. As many of our members continue to support the enormous humanitarian needs in Israel and Gaza, PQMD's thoughts are with everyone involved in this important and much-needed response.

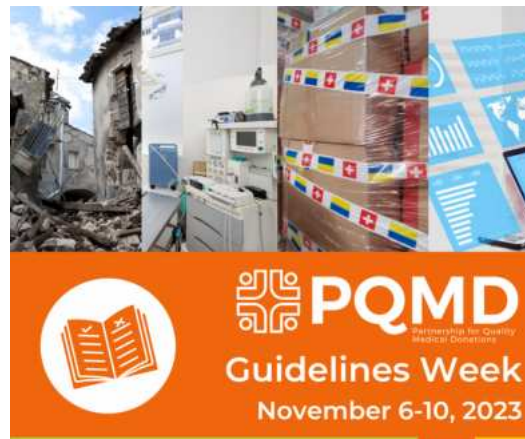
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### Guidelines Week Coming in November

In a change to PQMD's schedule this year, PQMD has designated November as Guidelines Month and will promote PQMD's Guidelines for Quality Medical Donations during the Week of November 6th. Help us celebrate with these [shareable resources](#), [and](#) be on the lookout for Guidelines news on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and the [Community of Practice](#).

PQMD's [Guidelines](#) ensure that international protocols for the delivery of donated medical products are followed and inform the work in supplying critical donated medical products, devices and services to those in need across the globe. PQMD is the go-to organization for guidelines related to the donation of medical supplies targeted to professionals who work for companies and organizations that donate money and medical supplies to address humanitarian crisis and disasters. Our Guidelines portfolio also includes guidelines specific to [medical missions](#) and [rare diseases](#).

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## Save the Date: PQMD 2024 Global Health Policy Forum

Save the date for PQMD's 2024 Global Health Policy Forum being held in New York City, NY from April 30-May 2, 2024. **More information coming soon!**

## Stay Informed!

Be sure to follow us on [LinkedIn](#) or one of our other social channels to get the latest, most up-to-date information on our Pillar Talks, courses, events, and resources.





## **PQMD Holds Coffee Chat: How to Make the Most of the PQMD Network**

On October 3rd, PQMD held its monthly Coffee Chat: How to Make the Most of the PQMD Network.

For over 20 years, the PQMD network has been a powerful source of information, learning and action for our members. With a foundational alignment on increasing access to medicine through quality medical donations, our alliance has grown and diversified along five pillars: humanitarian aid, disaster and response, health systems strengthening, knowledge and information, and guidelines.

PQMD boasts a wide range of formal and informal programs, including committees, courses, tools, and convenings aimed to advance and promote the work of our members, as well as our collective. Because of the unique nature of our alliance, there are many opportunities to engage equally as a learner, listener, and a leader. The enduring commitment of members and their representatives is a testament to the strength of the network and the peer support it provides to improve decision-making and impact via trusted partnerships.

In preparation for our 2023 Education Forum, Elizabeth "EJ" Ashbourne, Executive Director of PQMD provided an insider's guide along with seasoned members on "How to Make the Most of the PQMD Network".

*Learn more about Coffee Chats, which are included in [PQMD's Benefits of Membership](#), on the [CoP](#).*

A dark blue banner with a decorative left edge featuring diagonal stripes in green, yellow, and orange. The text 'MEMBER NEWS' is centered in white, uppercase letters.

**MEMBER NEWS**



## **Direct Relief Responds to Hurricane Otis, a Rare Category 5 Storm**

Hurricane Otis made landfall as a Category 5 storm on October 25th, directly impacting Acapulco, Mexico, a metropolitan area home to more than 1 million people. The storm intensified by 80 miles per hour in just 12 hours, the fastest rapid intensification in the eastern Northern Pacific in the satellite era since 1966.

Due to the severe impact of the storm, communications in the area have completely collapsed, posing challenges to government, emergency, and first responder agencies working to assess the extent of damage and impact on residents of the area. Initial reports from the Mexico Defense Ministry indicate both ground and air travel are unavailable.

Following major storms like Otis, widespread damage to homes and health facilities often leaves thousands displaced and at risk. Direct Relief works closely with local healthcare facilities in hurricane-prone areas around the world to ensure those in need have medication, supplies, and necessary care.

Direct Relief has initiated communication with its network of partner organizations, including Mexico's Federal Health Secretariat organization, the Operational Center for Contingency Attention (COPAC), The National Defense Ministry of Mexico (SEDENA), and Medical Impact, A non-governmental organization dedicated to providing health services and medical aid to disadvantaged communities in Mexico. These organizations have received funding and medical aid from Direct Relief to assist them in responding to disasters just like Hurricane Otis and were equipped with emergency medical packs and emergency health kits.

The situation in Acapulco is dynamic and impacts of the storm will continue to emerge in the days ahead. Direct Relief will continue to assess the situation and will be in communication with additional healthcare providers and first responder organizations to offer additional emergency medical resources as needed.

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# Heart to Heart INTERNATIONAL

## **Heart to Heart International Verified as a World Health Organization Emergency Medical Team (Type 1 Mobile)**

Heart to Heart International (HHI) recently received verification from the World Health Organization (WHO) as an Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Type 1 Mobile. This classification signifies the organization's ability to respond swiftly and efficiently, providing vital medical services after disasters and crises worldwide.

The certification establishes HHI as one of the few on the WHO's registry for internationally deployable teams for an emergency response. HHI is only the fourth team in the United States to receive such designation and 38th in the world.

"I am tremendously proud of our team of committed and skilled professionals. As one of the smaller humanitarian organizations to receive this honor, this is truly a significant undertaking that greatly enhances our ability to respond to disasters in the future," said Kim Carroll, HHI's CEO. "The WHO's recognition of our team serves as a signal to those we help, assuring them of our trustworthiness and genuine commitment to providing assistance worldwide."

HHI first embarked on the extensive process to receive this verification in 2016. Achieving this milestone has been made possible by the skill and dedication of numerous staff and volunteers as well as the invaluable guidance provided by mentors from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) who were assigned as part of the program.

To achieve the verification, HHI was required to demonstrate its capacity to be self-sufficient with the ability to move clinic locations daily while providing medical care for up to 50 patients a day for 14 days. These impressive capabilities were put on display through presentations, questioning and a mock medical field clinic set up during the visit of WHO representatives to HHI's headquarters in Lenexa, Kansas, on October 10 and 11, 2023.

"Throughout this challenging yet rewarding process, we have collaborated with a diverse group of medical professionals, volunteers and staff, each contributing their unique expertise and commitment to the project," said Dr. Agustina Boehringer, HHI's Chief Medical Officer. "Together, we improved our skills, strengthened our infrastructure and aligned our protocols to meet the highest international standards and to ensure our readiness to tackle emergencies on a global scale."

The organization views the achievement as a signal of its commitment to uphold professionalism, ethics and transparency in everything it does.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WEB

[\*\*Why dengue in Europe could spell disaster for the rest of the world\*\*](#)

Politico

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[\*\*Officials Describe 'Surreal' Scenes as Nagorno-Karabakh's Aid, Health Crisis Grows\*\*](#)

VOA

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[\*\*Libya floods: Derna's women 'invisible' as needs neglected in aftermath\*\*](#)

Middle East Eye

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[\*\*Sudan conflict leaves health system in near collapse: report\*\*](#)

Sudan Tribune

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[\*\*First Thing: IDF decries surprise Hamas attack as 'worst day in Israeli history'\*\*](#)

The Guardian

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[\*\*Over 2,000 feared dead after powerful earthquakes hit Afghanistan\*\*](#)

NPR

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[\*\*Aid convoy set to enter Gaza a 'drop in the ocean of need' says WHO\*\*](#)

The Guardian

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[\*\*Janssen Announces Promising Antiviral Activity Against Dengue in a Phase 2a Human Challenge Model\*\*](#)

Johnson & Johnson

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[\*\*Extreme Weather Makes a Hard Job Harder for India's Health Workers\*\*](#)

Global Health Now

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[\*\*Ending the neglect: lessons from a decade of success in responding to neglected tropical diseases in Africa\*\*](#)

WHO

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[\*\*Climate crisis could cause 'catastrophic harm' to human health, 200-plus medical journals warn\*\*](#)

CBC



## Upcoming Events

[CUGH Virtual Global Health Week](#); October 30- Nov 3, 2023

**SAVE THE DATE! PQMD Global Health Policy Forum**  
April 30-May 2, 2023;  
New York City, NY

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