



# Migrant & Refugee Health Crisis in Latin America

## Situation Report #1

July 2024 Updates | Published August 29, 2024

**Project HOPE has responded to the health crisis facing migrants and refugees in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2018. As the number of migrants rises and health needs become more urgent, our teams have expanded programming in Colombia, Ecuador, and Honduras.**

### Response Overview

As more and more people are displaced and make the difficult decision to migrate through Latin America, health and humanitarian needs have increased in the region. Project HOPE is now providing health support — paired with urgently needed protection and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services — to migrants and host community members in Colombia, Ecuador and Honduras, which host large numbers of migrants and are home to high-flow migratory transit pathways.

Project HOPE’s regional response to the health crisis facing migrants and refugees is powered by support from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From January-July 2024, Project HOPE reached more than 16,000 migrants and host community members through the following regional response activities:

### Key Updates

- Project HOPE is supporting the **health, WASH, and protection needs** of migrants and local host communities in **Colombia, Ecuador, and Honduras**.
- Local teams at **26 site locations** are providing **urgent health and humanitarian services** in areas hosting large numbers of migrants and/or high volumes of migratory transit.
- **Psychological first aid** is being provided to migrants in all three countries at **10 site locations**.
- Project HOPE’s medical teams are conducting medical consultations at **17 health facilities and mobile clinics**.
- Essential infrastructure **rehabilitation and repair** projects are underway at **eight site locations**.
- 1,830 WASH kits have been distributed to 1,769 migrants and host community members

- Supported **26 site locations** — including health centers, shelters, transit centers and mobile clinics — with health services, WASH repairs, rehabilitation projects, and equipment.
- Provided health services to migrant and host community members at **17 health facilities and mobile clinics**
- Engaged **35 health workers** to provide health services
- Provided 12,885 outpatient medical consultations
- Reached **4,128 people** with health promotion and community outreach services
- Provided 1,092 psychological consultations
- Completed WASH rehabilitations projects at **eight migrant support sites** (health facilities, shelters, and transit centers)
- Distributed **1,830 WASH kits** (hygiene, dignity, and birth kits) to **1,769 people**

## Colombia



Program participants receive WASH kits at the Centro de Atención de Migrantes (CATM) Shelter in Villa del Rosario, Norte de Santander Department. Photo by Project HOPE Staff, 2024.

## Country Updates

Colombia continues to host the highest numbers of migrants and refugees from Venezuela compared to any other country in the world. Since August 2021, the estimated number of Venezuelans living in Colombia increased from 1.8 million to nearly 3 million by mid-2024. Despite the country's efforts to regularize pathways through the Temporary Statute of Protection for Venezuelans, the steady flow of migration continues to overwhelm health and social systems, which are subsequently unable to meet the basic humanitarian needs of those migrating. In Norte de Santander, a department that shares a border with Tachira State in Venezuela, there continues to be millions of pendular migrants each year that cross the border for temporary periods

In **Colombia**, Project HOPE operates in three municipalities in **Norte de Santander Department**:

- Villa del Rosario
- Cúcuta
- Convención



Project HOPE teams provide support at **six health facilities and one shelter** in Colombia.

Project HOPE's **response activities** in Colombia include:

- Medical staff surge support
- Pharmaceutical, medical supply, and equipment deliveries
- Medical consultations
- Psychological consultations
- Community health education
- WASH kit distributions
- WASH facility repairs and rehabilitation

in search of health care, jobs, and other services. With the recent closure of the border following the elections in Venezuela at the end of July, humanitarian and government actors are anticipating a new migratory wave, including an increase in irregular border crossings. These crossings are often dangerous routes that put families and people in vulnerable positions at an increased risk of threats like violence and trafficking.

## Program Updates

Project HOPE has launched response operations in Norte de Santander Department, responding to the most urgent needs of migrant populations in the municipalities of Cúcuta and Villa del Rosario and responding to the needs of migrants and communities affected by ongoing armed conflict and in the municipality of Convención in the Catatumbo Region. Partnerships have been formalized with three Hospital Social Enterprises of the State (ESEs) in the support areas to facilitate the provision of health services to the unregularized migrant population and host community members that have fallen outside of the health system.

## Health Activities

### Medical Staff Surge Support

Fifteen health workers (three gynecologists, five general practitioners, and seven auxiliary nurses) have been hired to provide primary care and gynecological consultations through agreements with the three hospital ESEs. Project HOPE coordinates the rotation of these health care workers to six health facilities and one shelter to augment existing health personnel and strengthen access for migrants and refugees at the supported locations across Convención, Villa del Rosario, and Cúcuta.

### Pharmaceuticals, Medical Supplies, and Equipment

Project HOPE purchased and delivered basic primary health care medicines to support the initiation of health services. After conducting needs assessments, the team also delivered medical supplies and equipment items to seven supported locations to ensure optimal provision of gynecological, obstetric, and primary health care services.

### Medical Consultations

Primary health care consultations began at the Las Margaritas health facility and Centro de Atención de Migrantes (CATM) shelter locations in Villa del Rosario during the second week of April and at the other five establishments during the second week of May. The number of consultations being provided has steadily increased over the initial months, with 3,459 medical consultations provided from April 1 to July 31, 2024, including 741 obstetric/gynecological consultations and 2,718 primary health care consultations.

Of all patients reached:

- 77% were Venezuelan
- 18% were Colombian
- 57% were seeking permanent residency in Colombia
- 22% identified as pendular migrants
- 16% identified as returnees
- 2% were in transit to other locations

***“84% of patients reached by Project HOPE did not have prior access to the public health care system in Colombia”***

*-Sara Leonard, Project HOPE Program Manager*

**Table 1: Medical Consultations in Colombia By Location and Consultation Type, April 1-July 31, 2024**

Municipality/Facility	Type of Location	Primary Health Care Consultations	OB-GYN Consultations	Total
<b>Convención</b>	-	<b>1250</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>1,412</b>
IPS Convención	Health facility	496	162	658
Puesto de Salud la Trinidad	Health facility	754	-	754
<b>Cúcuta</b>	-	<b>830</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>1,409</b>
UBA Comuneros	Health facility	390	237	627
UBA Puente Barco Leones	Health facility	440	342	782
<b>Villa del Rosario</b>	-	<b>638</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>638</b>
CATM	Shelter	91	-	91
Las Margaritas	Health facility	355	-	355
PS La Parada	Health facility	192	-	192
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 health facilities and 1 shelter</b>	<b>2,718</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>3,459</b>

## Community Health Education

Despite initial challenges in recruiting a Community Health Promoter, Project HOPE launched community health promotion activities in July. Project HOPE’s Community Health Promoter coordinated with community and health facility leadership to hold five group sessions with 167 migrants and community members in Cúcuta. During group sessions, the Community Health Promoter introduced beneficiaries to Project HOPE, the program, the availability of health and psychological services through the program, as well as information on core topics including gender-based violence (GBV) and psychoeducation in health. These sessions also serve as a platform for the distribution of hygiene kits as all attendees that are invited to sessions meet the required vulnerability criteria to receive these items. Project HOPE plans to scale up community health promotion activities to Villa del Rosario in August.

## Comprehensive Care Linkages

Project HOPE has worked to identify and improve linkages with cooperative and allied organizations to facilitate the provision of comprehensive care. Services provided by other actors that have been mapped include protection services for GBV survivors, laboratory tests for further medical investigation and specialized chronic disease care, such as for cervical cancer.

## Protection Activities

### Psychological Consultations

One psychologist has been engaged under the program and began providing consultations in May at two locations in Villa del Rosario, CATM, and Centro Integral Las Margaritas. Project HOPE’s psychologist provides psychological first aid (PFA),

psychosocial support, and schedules follow-up appointments with patients as needed. Dignity kits are also distributed to patients attending psychological consultations in line with the defined vulnerability criteria. A total of 522 psychology consultations were provided at these two locations from May to July. Of these consultations, 93% reported having anxiety and stress, 31% reported depression, 26% reported irritability, 66% reported insomnia, and 16% reported sleeping in excess. Additionally, 33% reported having experienced physical violence, 32% reported having experienced psychological violence, and 11% reported experiencing sexual violence.

Services have not been able to be provided in Cúcuta as this service must be authorized at the facility by the ESE. However, Project HOPE has been able to refer patients from the health units who demonstrated a need for psychological support to its psychologist in Villa del Rosario.

## WASH Activities

### Kit Distributions

Project HOPE has worked to procure WASH non-food item (NFI) kits, including dignity kits, hygiene kits, and birth kits. In addition, the team has defined vulnerability criteria to ensure WASH kits go to people with the highest level of needs. Vulnerability criteria includes: female head of household, women and adolescent girls of reproductive age, pregnant and postpartum women, adults with minors within their nuclear family, older adults, people with disabilities, and adults without employment. A small WASH kit distribution was conducted in May, with further distributions in June and July. To date, a total of 1,701 kits have been distributed to 1,634 unique participants, including women, children, and men. These kits included 836 dignity kits, 35 birth kits, 311 hygiene kits for men, and 515 kits for children.

### WASH Facility Improvements

Project HOPE carried out a rapid assessment of WASH needs at program sites across all three municipalities using the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool. Through this process and follow-up visits, repairs were identified at six of the seven program sites and designs were developed and shared with ESE authorities and site leadership. Projects are currently planned for August-October 2024.

## Upcoming Activities

During August, Project HOPE will continue to:

- Work with ESEs and CATM to scale up the provision of health and psychological consultations
- Expand community health promotion sessions to Villa del Rosario
- Scale up the distribution of NFI kits through consultations and community health promotion
- Continue the phased allocation of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to program sites
- Undertake WASH and infrastructure repairs at four additional sites.

Project HOPE remains an active participant in the health cluster, led by PAHO, the

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**Dignity kits** include hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, sanitary pads, combs, and detergent.

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**Hygiene kits** for adults and children include items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, insect repellent, soap, and shampoo.

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**Birth kits** include items such as shampoo, soap, diapers, wet wipes, a newborn set, diaper cream, and nursing pads.

## Colombia Impact

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2,718 primary care consultations



741 gynecological care consultations

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522 psychological consultations



Ministry of Health, and the Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows. Through these coordination mechanisms, as well as current health partners, Project HOPE will continue to monitor and evaluate changes in migratory flows and the vulnerabilities faced by both migrants and host community members in areas of program operations to ensure the team is meeting the most pressing needs.

## Ecuador



Tania, a Project HOPE nurse, provides care to migrants inside a shelter in Rumichaca. Photo by James Buck for Project HOPE, 2024.

## Country Updates

Between January and June 2024, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded an average monthly migration flow of 26,000 people from various nationalities passing through Ecuador. January had the lowest number of entries and February had the highest. The total average number of departures was 27,000, with the highest and lowest numbers occurring in June and February, respectively. Migrants included people from Venezuela, Haiti, Colombia, and Ecuador, who intended to either continue their journey to other countries or seek residency in different areas of the country. According to data from the UNHCR office in Ecuador, the Venezuelan community continues to represent the highest in-transit population in terms of inflows and outflows. It is also important to note that the number of migrants seeking international protection has increased by 31% compared to 2023.

## Program Updates

Response operations have been launched in the Tulcán region, located in the province of Carchi. This area houses a border between Ecuador and Colombia with an average of roughly 700 people crossing on a weekly basis. Project HOPE is working to improve access to basic health services for migrants through integrated services at municipal service centers, shelters, and health facilities.

In **Ecuador**, Project HOPE operates in the border region of Tulcán, in Carchi Province.



Project HOPE teams provide support at **eight site locations**, including health facilities, shelters and humanitarian assistance points.

Project HOPE's **response activities** in Ecuador include:

- Medical staff surge support
- Pharmaceutical, medical supply, and equipment deliveries
- Medical consultations
- Psychological consultations
- Referral pathways for protection services
- WASH kit distributions
- Potable water assistance
- WASH facility repairs and rehabilitation

## Health Activities

### Medical Staff Surge Support

Two physicians, two nurses, and two psychologists have been engaged and providing care since May. These numbers were increased from initial plans to further bolster the health care team's capacity to meet the target population's demand for services.

### Pharmaceuticals, Medical Supplies, and Equipment

Project HOPE's Health Team in Ecuador has been fully equipped with medical supplies and medical equipment to ensure the provision of quality health services. Additionally, Project HOPE has established an agreement with DIFARE, a local pharmacy, to provide free-of-charge pharmaceuticals with a prescription from providers supported by Project HOPE. Through the pharmaceutical purchase and dispensing agreement with DIFARE, 1,473 people have received medicine, to date.

### Medical Consultations

Health services are being provided on a weekly basis at the shelter locations. In total, Project HOPE's medical and nursing teams have provided 1,782 primary health care consultations in 2024. Of these consultations, 60% were for communicable diseases, 24% were for non-communicable diseases, and were 2% for obstetric/gynecological care. Patients are roughly 54% female and 46% male. Of those reached with consultations, 67% were Venezuelan, 8% were Ecuadorian, and 25% were of other nationalities, including Colombian, Haitian, Peruvian, Chilean, and more.

**Table 2: Medical Consultations Provided by Location in Tulcán, May-July 2024**

Location	Number of Medical Consultations
CAT Rumichaca	502
Alebergue Patronato	69
Cáritas Dining Room	182
Project HOPE Medical Office	578
Transit Point	53
Medical Center Tajamar Hostels	233
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,782</b>

### Health Education

Doctor and nurse health teams provide individualized health education sessions during consultations to ensure that content meets the specific needs of each patient.

## Protection Activities

### Establishing Referral Pathways for GBV survivors

Project HOPE has worked in collaboration with the Working Group for Refugees and Migrants to provide GBV survivors with access to specialized care, including case

*"Migrants struggle with uncertainty, so to be able to provide those resources to them, and help them, it makes them feel more relaxed. It's like, they have more confidence in saying, 'I know what's the next step that I have to do.'"*

*-Dr. Marilyn Garcia, Project HOPE psychologist in Tulcán*

management, social, and legal services. Referral pathways have been identified with organizations that specialize in protection support and are activated to provide prompt specialized assistance for GBV cases identified during medical or psychological consultations. Within the past six months, four GBV cases have been identified and referred to the designated protection route for further assistance and support.



Dr. Marilyn Garcia, a psychologist on Project HOPE's medical team in Tulcán, Ecuador, leads a group therapy session for migrants at the Temporary Accommodation Center (Centro de Alojamiento Temporal, or CAT). Photo by James Buck for Project HOPE, 2024.

### Psychological Consultations

Psychological consultations are provided by Project HOPE's two psychologists and delivered via rotational services at the shelters. As of July 2024, 510 psychological consultations have been provided across supported locations.

**Table 3: Psychological Consultations Provided by Location in Tulcán, May-July 2024**

Location	Total
CAT Rumichaca	229
Alebergue Patronato	22
Medical Center Tajamar	16
Cáritas Dining Room,	42
Project HOPE Medical Office	120
Transit Point	16
Hostels	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>510</b>



## WASH Activities

### Kit Distributions

WASH kits were procured and received by Project HOPE at the end of July. Target locations and timeframes for delivering the kits have been developed and meetings have been conducted with local migrant-serving organizations in need of hygiene kits. A small distribution of kits was completed before the end of July at the Transit Point site on the Ecuador-Colombia border. At this distribution, 129 migrants were provided with hygiene kits, with different kits provided for male, female, infant, and child migrants. Distribution was accompanied by hygiene promotion and education on the use of received items and the integration of good hygiene practices into daily routines.

### WASH Facility Improvements

There is a substantial need for WASH facility improvements at sites providing services to migrant populations. Thus far, 19 locations have been assessed in Tulcán, all of which require improvements to provide functional WASH facilities.

Project HOPE reviewed plans to rehabilitate WASH facilities at health facilities, including projects such as the construction and maintenance of toilets and handwashing stations, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, the government of Carchi, and the municipality of Tulcán. This review resulted in an expanded scope of works needed to provide functioning WASH facilities at locations providing services to migrants. Project HOPE has undertaken WASH needs assessments within one shelter, 11 health centers, three provincial government sites, and four Tulcán municipality sites.

WASH interventions were undertaken in four locations in July. Works were completed at the CAT Rumichaca shelter, Health Center Tajamar, and Health Center Santa Marta de Cuba. Work at Health Center No. 1 was 70% complete as of the end of July. WASH facility improvements are also planned for 11 locations in August 2024 and four locations in September. Cleaning kits will be delivered to health facilities in August to assist with appropriate cleaning and maintenance of WASH facilities.

### Potable Water Assistance

The water pipeline at Health Center No. 1 in Tulcán has been addressed to ensure a consistent and reliable supply of potable water. This project will be coupled with the upgrading of WASH infrastructure to enable conditions for high quality health service provision.

### Upcoming Activities

In August, immediate priorities include the implementation of several improvements to WASH facilities at 11 identified locations. Hygiene kits are scheduled to be delivered to program participants at the dining room shelter, World Food Programme assistance points (both transit and permanent), and the Espacio de Apoyo Integral. Furthermore, UNHCR has extended an invitation to the Project HOPE health team to conduct a medical brigade at the end of August, in collaboration with the Foundation of the Americas (FUDELA) and the Ministry of Health.

## Ecuador Impact

**Six health professionals** (two doctors, two nurses, and two psychologists) were recruited and are now providing services.



**Three WASH interventions** have been undertaken at three ministry health facilities.

**2,292 medical and psychological consultations** were provided in Tulcán.



## Honduras



Project HOPE's medical team provides health care for migrants at the Las Manos Health Point. Photo by James Buck for Project HOPE, 2024.

### Country Updates

From January-June 2024, 248,035 people were reported by UNHCR to have undertaken migratory transit through Honduras in irregular conditions. Of these, 97% entered the country through the El Paraíso Department, where Project HOPE is currently providing services in three municipalities, with the remaining 3% entering through Choluteca Department. According to a report presented by the Instituto Nacional de Migración (INM), there was a 14% increase in people entering the El Paraíso Department from May to June, suggesting that migrant flow will continue to be a pressing humanitarian concern in the coming months.

### Program Updates

Project HOPE has commenced operations in the most affected areas of El Paraíso Department and is working to provide health, WASH, and protection support in municipal centers, shelters, and health facilities to improve access to basic primary health services for people transiting through or living in El Paraíso. Support is currently being provided at 13 sites. Of these, seven sites are being supported with medical consultations, eight sites have been supported with WASH infrastructure repairs, and four sites have received both health and WASH support. A ninth site will receive WASH repairs in August. In addition, three sites are receiving laundry and drying equipment.

### Health Activities

#### Medical Staff Surge Support

Since July, 14 health staff (six doctors, four nurses, one psychologist, and three Community Health Workers) have been recruited and began providing services. In order

In **Honduras**, Project HOPE operates in the most affected municipalities of the **El Paraíso Department**:

- Alauca (Los Manos border crossing)
- Danlí
- Trojes



Project HOPE teams provide support at **municipal centers, shelters, and health facilities** in

Project HOPE's **response activities** in Honduras include:

- Medical staff surge support
- Pharmaceutical, medical supply, and equipment deliveries
- Medical consultations
- Psychological consultations
- Mental health and resiliency trainings for staff at migrant support site locations
- WASH kit distributions
- WASH facility repairs and rehabilitation

to increase mobile medical services, staffing will be bolstered in August.

## Pharmaceuticals, Medical Supplies, and Equipment

Project HOPE has assembled the required medical supplies, medical equipment, and pharmaceuticals to operate four mobile clinics. In addition, Project HOPE has provided 30,715 units of medical supplies, medicines, and laboratory supplies to the Regional Health Office and two health facilities (CIS Luis Lazo and CIA Amigos de las Americas) in Trojes in June and July to ensure that static health facilities had the supplies they needed to respond to migrant health needs. In the same months, 15 medical equipment items were provided to the same health facilities.

## Medical Consultations

Project HOPE operates mobile clinics and supports static health facilities to provide primary health care consultations. Three mobile clinics are currently operating in two municipalities. Two mobile clinics in Danlí serve the areas of El Pescadero and the Bus Terminal and one mobile clinic in Trojes serves the CIS Amigos de las Americas health facility location. Three additional mobile clinics are planned to be added in August, including one in Danlí serving the CAMI Danlí Migrant Care Center and two in Trojes serving the INM Office and the Consorcio Life Temporary Rest Center. Project HOPE also provides support to the static health facility Gabriela Alvarado Hospital Outpatient Department in Danlí.

From April to July 2024, a total of 5,752 medical consultations were provided across three municipalities. A total of 800 vaccinations were provided through medical consultations and vaccination events. Of the patients reached with medical consultations and vaccinations, 48% were Honduran, 43% were Venezuelan, 3% were Colombian, and 6% identified with 35 other nationalities. The majority of patients (45%) had irregular migratory status, while less than 1% had regular migratory status.

**Table 4: Consultations Provided by Type and Location in El Paraíso, May-July 2024**

Municipality	Consultations	Vaccinations	Total
Danlí	4,173	236	4,409
Trojes	1,534	564	2,098
Alauca	45	0	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,752</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>6,552</b>

## Community Health Education

Health education sessions were provided at supported site locations, with 3,961 individuals reached to date, including 1,750 in Danlí and 2,211 in Trojes.

## Protection Activities

### Psychological Consultations

Project HOPE's psychology specialist provides PFA and related psychosocial support to migrants in transit through support sessions at mobile clinic sites. PFA sessions were

provided in one location, with 60 sessions provided from May-July. PFA support sessions are planned to start in the Trojes region in August.

Of the 60 people reached with psychological consultations, 100% reported experiencing anxiety and stress, 10% reported depression, 23% reported irritability, 61% reported insomnia, and 15% reported feeling a lack of self-esteem. Additionally, 26% reported having experienced physical violence, 71% reported having experienced psychological violence, and 30% reported experiencing sexual violence.

### Mental Health and Resiliency Training for Staff

Project HOPE's psychologists are also working to provide mental health and resiliency trainings to institutional staff at health facilities, temporary rest centers, and other migrant support locations. Training began in July in one municipality, with 11 people trained. Further trainings are planned from August-December.

### WASH Activities

#### Kit Distributions

Project HOPE has undertaken the procurement process for the future planned delivery of 13,753 hygiene kits and 215,000 water bottles. WASH supplies will be delivered at supported sites starting in August 2024.

#### WASH Facility Improvements

Based on the needs assessed by Project HOPE, the team began rehabilitating toilets, handwashing stations, and other WASH facilities at eight sites, including six health facilities and two international health offices. Two maternity units and one health center were also provided with laundry and drying equipment.

### Upcoming Activities

During August, Project HOPE plans to undertake the following activities to further expand humanitarian support for migrant and host populations:

- Increase the capacity of the health team by hiring an additional medical doctor, two additional nurses, and one additional CHW, bringing the health team to 17.
- Expand mobile medical services, with three new mobile clinics (one in Danlí and two in Trojes)
- Deliver medical equipment and supplies to the outpatient clinic of the Gabriela Alvarado Hospital
- Coordinate the distribution of hygiene kits and water bottles with strategic partners that are also providing care to migrants
- Conduct WASH facility repairs at the humanitarian space in Danlí
- Continue providing training and psychological support for institutional staff

## Honduras Impact

5,752 primary care consultations



800 vaccinations

60 psychological consultations



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