

Operation Blessing International Sending Four Million Doses Of Essential Medicine To Haiti In Response To New Virus Sweeping Caribbean

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (June 2, 2014) -- Responding to reports of a new painful mosquito-borne virus that's spreading rapidly through the Caribbean – the Chikungunya virus – the global humanitarian organization Operation Blessing International (OBI) is flying four million doses of medicine into Haiti that treats high fever and reduces pain.

The medicine, Paracetamol, better known as acetaminophen in the United States, is considered “the drug of choice” by the World Health Organization to decrease the symptoms of the virus.

OBI has been in Haiti since 2009, preceding an intense earthquake that devastated the tiny Caribbean nation. For about four years, OBI has been conducting numerous relief and recovery efforts and rebuilding programs including a home for abandoned children and children with disabilities – Zanmi Beni – built by OBI that is run in conjunction with Dr. Paul Farmer and Partners in Health, establishing the largest fish farm in Haiti that provides food and jobs for Haitians, hosting medical teams from the Mayo Clinic, partnering with Greif Corp and the Clinton Foundation to build a school and help a village near Lake Azuei, and providing safe water throughout the country, just to name a few.

On delivering the medicine, Bill Horan, president of OBI, said, “We will utilize our extensive distribution network in Haiti to get the medicine into clinics, especially to those serving the poor in rural areas, and to the clinics treating children and the elderly who are at increased risk due to dangerously high-fever associated with the virus.”

According to Horan, the medical shipment is coming from OBI's supplier in the Netherlands and will be able to treat more than 125,000 people, given the recommended dosage by the World Health Organization.

In addition to fever, the Chikungunya virus - more commonly found in Africa and Asia – is transmitted by the same daytime-biting mosquitoes that also carry the deadly dengue fever. The virus causes painful headaches and excruciating pain to the bones and joints, according to news reports.

The virus was first detected in the eastern Caribbean five months ago, and in Haiti in early May, according to news reports. Since its outbreak, the virus has jumped from island to island, sending thousands of patients to the hospital and health officials scrambling to respond to the surge of patients. There is no vaccine or treatment that can cure the virus, but the virus is usually not

deadly to healthy adults although it is dangerous for children and anyone with preexisting health issues. Symptoms typically begin to dissipate within a week.

Stay tuned to www.OB.org for more details to come.

ABOUT OPERATION BLESSING INTERNATIONAL:

Operation Blessing International (OBI) is one of the largest charities in America, providing strategic disaster relief, medical aid, hunger relief, clean water and community development in 23 countries around the world on a daily basis. Currently, Forbes ranks OBI as one of its “100 Largest Charities” with an efficiency rating of 99%, and Consumers Digest also named OBI as one of “America’s Top Charities” in 2012. Founded in 1978, Operation Blessing International has touched the lives of more than 255 million people in more than 105 countries and 50 states, providing goods and services valued at over \$3.3 billion to date.

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