



Cuban medical team heading for Sierra Leone

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Cuba is known the world over for its ability to train excellent doctors and nurses who can then go out to help other countries in need. Currently there are more than 50 000 Cuban-trained health workers in 66 countries.



WHO/M. Missioneiro

Dr Roberto Morales Ojeda, Minister of Public Health, has announced that Cuba will send a medical team of 165 people to Sierra Leone to help in the frontline in the Ebola response efforts.

This is the largest offer of a foreign medical team from a single country during this outbreak.

“Money and materials are important, but those two things alone cannot stop Ebola virus transmission,” says Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General at the World Health Organization (WHO).

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Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General at the World Health Organization

“Human resources are clearly our most important need. We need most especially compassionate doctors and nurses, who will know how to comfort patients despite the barriers of wearing PPE (personal protective equipment) and working under very demanding conditions”.

Experienced team that has worked in crises

The Cuban team consists of 100 nurses, 50 doctors, 3 epidemiologists, 3 intensive care specialists, 3 infection control specialist nurses and 5 social mobilization officers, all overseen by epidemiologist Dr Jorge Juan Delgado Bustillo.

All of the Cuban health workers have more than 15 years' experience and have worked in other countries facing natural disasters and disease outbreaks. Some of the workers have already been working in Sierra Leone and Guinea for some years and are willing to continue their service there.

Once they have all followed WHO-standard infection control training in Cuba, the team will pack supplies of PPE and travel to Sierra Leone in early October. They will stay there for 6 months, working in shifts in smaller teams in Ebola treatment centres and community clinics.

Strong message of solidarity

Dr Bruce Aylward, Assistant Director at WHO, says “Those of us who have been working on the response efforts at WHO know how truly



WHO/T. Jasarevic

valuable this offer is. Many countries have offered money but no other country has offered such a large number of workers to go in and help do the most difficult jobs in this crisis.”

It is hoped that this offer of support will send a strong message of solidarity for Africa to the rest of the world and will catalyse additional offers of support from other countries.

Related links on Ebola virus disease

[Ebola virus disease - website](#)

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