



## SUCCESS STORY

# Saving Lives through Public Outreach

**The Government of Haiti is providing critical information in the fight against cholera.**



USAID/Haiti

Haitian Minister of Health Alex Larson responds to questions on the cholera outbreak at a conference in Saint Marc.

**November 2010** – Haiti has seen more than its share of adversity in the past year—from the devastating earthquake that left unprecedented numbers of people dead or homeless to seasonal hurricanes that have wreaked havoc on the displaced and their temporary shelters. An October outbreak of cholera is only the latest hardship adding to the country's burden.

The cholera threat is seen as a litmus test on the Haitian Government's ability to respond to a public health crisis, and the effective dissemination of information about prevention and treatment options will be essential to keeping the disease at bay.

In the aftermath of the January earthquake, the Ministry of Culture and Communications took the lead in providing information to the public, and USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) has been working with the ministry to help the government communicate with the people.

Since the start of the cholera outbreak, the Communications Ministry has hosted daily press conferences at its press center, which was built with OTI support. At these events, the Ministry of Health, along with the Ministries of Interior and Agriculture and various U.N. agency counterparts, has provided critical information on the prevention and treatment of the disease as well as regular updates on the outbreak.

Another vehicle being used to disseminate public health information is "News You Can Use," a daily, 15-minute radio show that provides Haitians with information on humanitarian relief and recovery efforts. Internews, the show's producer, broadcast a special program on the cholera outbreak on October 23 and continues to provide updates on the daily program. The show, which is produced in collaboration with OTI, airs on 32 radio stations and reaches most of the country.

Information on cholera prevention and treatment is also being spread through OTI's temporary work programs, which employ approximately 6,000 Haitians per day in and around Port-au-Prince. Training sessions are conducted jointly by job site managers and medical professionals and cover guidelines outlined in the Ministry of Health's "8 Messages on Cholera" pamphlet. Prevention materials are distributed during the sessions, and workers and team leaders are encouraged to share the information with family members and friends.

On the public outreach front, the Government of Haiti is confronting the cholera outbreak with a multi-pronged approach, working to disperse the knowledge its citizens need to protect themselves.