



# NAVY MEDICINE

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

### **Non Governmental Organizations Work with Navy Counterparts to Provide Hope on USNS Comfort**

WASHINGTON, DC – The first wave of non-governmental medical volunteers boarded the Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort Jan. 27 and began working side by side with the embarked Navy medical team to provide critical care for Haitian patients who were hurt during the Jan. 12 earthquake. The first rotation consisted of Project HOPE volunteers and included medical professionals with experience in surgery, neonatal intensive care, pediatrics, post anesthesia care, intensive care and physical therapy. COMFORT deployed from its homeport of Baltimore, Md. Jan. 16 with an all Navy medical team due to the short-fused deployment order.

The Navy is now actively working with several NGOs to augment the longer-term plan for medical assistance onboard the hospital ship and anticipates the number of NGO medical personnel working onboard COMFORT to grow in the day and weeks ahead.

“We are working closely with NGOs like Project HOPE to bring in volunteer support to sustain the long-term mission of care for the people of Haiti,” said CDR Brad Hartgerink, Director for NGO coordination at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. “There are a number of outstanding NGOs eager to participate in the global outreach to help all those in need in Haiti.”

The Department of the Navy has become increasingly involved with other U.S. government agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) since it adopted a new maritime strategy in 2007 that elevated stability missions to the same priority as combat operations and committed itself to working more closely with its civilian partners. Project HOPE has worked side by side with Navy during 15 other humanitarian missions including the Indonesian Tsunami relief, Pacific Partnership, African Partnership Station, Hurricane Katrina and was quick to send credentialed volunteers from their database who were already experienced in working side by side with their Navy counterparts.

13 of the 32 volunteers who embarked Comfort previously volunteered with Project HOPE on U.S. Navy humanitarian missions to Southeast Asia, Latin America or West Africa, including volunteer and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Harold Timboe who arrived on the Comfort last Wednesday, Jan. 20, and immediately assisted the Navy's medical staff in caring for the first 60 Haitian patients to be admitted to the 1,000-bed floating hospital ship.

“Project HOPE and the U.S. Navy together bring an unyielding and selfless spirit of care and compassion to the people of Haiti,” said John P. Howe, III, M.D., President and CEO of Project HOPE. “I cannot think of a more powerful partnership for health and goodwill for the Haitian people than the partnership formed between Project HOPE and the Navy.”

USNS COMFORT provides long-term support because it is self-sustaining. The safe environment and technology on COMFORT make it a perfect asset to conduct training and as a base for DOD and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) enduring support.

“Responses such as our work in Haiti require an unprecedented level of integration among our military forces and enhanced cooperation with the other instruments of national power, as well as the capabilities of non-governmental agencies and others.” said Vice Adm. Adam Robinson, the Navy's Surgeon General. “Our sister services and NGOs are valued partners in providing medical care to those in need during this critical mission and will be for many years to come.”

Approximately 1,500 Navy medical and medical support teams are currently involved in the humanitarian relief mission in Haiti including those embarked on the hospital ship, USNS Comfort, and other Navy ships providing needed medical assistance throughout the region.

For more information about Navy Medicine, please visit [www.med.navy.mil](http://www.med.navy.mil)

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