



AdChoices

HEALTH 06/05/2018 06:24 pm ET

Hurricane Season Has Started. Here's What Medical Experts Say Is Needed To Save Lives.

A recent study found that about one-third of deaths in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria were a result of interruption of medical care. These steps could help.



By Carolina Moreno



CAROLINA MORENO/HUFFPOST

An emergency room in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, weeks after Hurricane Maria made landfall on the island.

The [2018 hurricane season](#) began Friday, a stressful time for communities most likely to be affected. In recent years, southeastern U.S. cities, like Houston and New Orleans, and Caribbean islands such as the U.S. Virgin Islands and Dominica have seen their infrastructure, economies and public health majorly affected by the high winds and heavy flooding that can accompany a major storm.

The new season also puts in sharp relief the ways in which Puerto Rico has [yet to recover](#) from a cascade of natural disasters last year, culminating in the devastating [Hurricane Maria](#) on Sept. 20, 2017.

A [recent Harvard study](#) estimated that nearly 5,000 people died in Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Maria — 70 times higher than the government's official count. The study also showed how dangerous a loss of infrastructure can be for individuals who depend on routine medical care to live.

According to the report, around [one-third of households surveyed reported having issues](#) that threatened their health and safety after the hurricane, including not being able to access medication, having no open medical facilities nearby and not being able to reach 911 services.

These challenges were often caused or exacerbated by the island's near total loss of power. Eight months after the storm's landfall, [power has yet to be fully restored](#).

As the new season begins, experts are eager to help lessen the number of lives lost after a major storm. HuffPost spoke to public health and disaster preparedness experts about what medical professionals and facilities can do to prepare for a major hurricane in Puerto Rico and other regions at risk during this

MOST SHARED



Meghan, Duchess Of Sussex, Steps Out For Her First Solo Appearance With The Queen



Montgomery, Alabama: This Tiny Company

Sponsored by EverQuote



John Travolta's 'Grease' Dance With Jimmy Fallon Is Electrifying



DOJ Watchdog Finds James Comey Broke FBI Rules In Clinton Case, Report Says



George Lucas' 'Star Wars' Sequel Idea Will Make Fans Cringe

WHAT'S HOT



Franklin Graham Blasts Trump's Immigrant Family Separations At Border



The Netflix for Learning Makes Learning Simple

Sponsored by The Great Courses Plus



Designer Stefano Gabbana Calls Selena Gomez 'So Ugly' On Instagram



Nick Offerman Dated Born-Again Christian To Learn About Lovemaking



Jeff Sessions Says Firing James Comey 'Was The Right Thing To Do'



GOP Senate Candidate Attacks Chris Cuomo's Dad In Off-The-Rails Live Interview



Montgomery, Alabama: This Tiny Company

Sponsored by EverQuote



Hawaii Becomes First State To Ban Widely-Used Pesticide Found To Be Harmful To Kids

HUFFPOST

[ABOUT US](#)

[ADVERTISE](#)

[About Our Ads](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[RSS](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Careers](#)

[Archive](#)

[User Agreement](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Comment Policy](#)

[HuffPost Press Room](#)

HuffPost
An Oath brand

©2018 Oath Inc. All rights reserved. HuffPost News