

WaterStep Supports Jamaica's Health System as Leptospirosis Concerns Rise After Hurricane Melissa

Jamaican health teams take bold, preventative action

KINGSTON, JAMAICA, November 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As Jamaica confronts rising public-health risks following Hurricane Melissa, WaterStep, a global leader in safe water innovation, is expanding its partnership with the Ministry of Health & Wellness, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), and community health teams to deploy onsite bleach-making and safe-water tools across clinics, hospitals, and other frontline facilities.

The work comes as Jamaican officials investigate whether two individuals involved in post-Melissa cleanup in Catherine Hall and Westgreen, St. James, may have died from leptospirosis — a bacterial disease often spread through water contaminated by the urine of infected animals.



Jamaican health clinics use WaterStep's patented BleachMaker to produce disinfectant to help combat waterborne illnesses in the wake of Hurricane Melissa.

Both communities were inundated on October 28 when the Barnett, Pye, and Montego rivers overflowed, pushing thick mud, debris, and contaminated water into homes, businesses, and roadways. Flooding left residents facing days of sanitation risks and exposure to water that can carry serious disease.

Following the storm, the Ministry of Health & Wellness issued a nationwide advisory urging Jamaicans to avoid wading in floodwater, wear protective gear during cleanup, refrain from consuming food that may have been exposed to contaminated water, and seek immediate medical care if they experience fever, chills, muscle aches, or other flu-like symptoms.

WaterStep's response is focused on ensuring that a second wave of suffering — caused by water-borne disease — does not follow the storm. Working closely with Jamaican authorities, WaterStep is rapidly pre-positioning 320 patented BleachMakers and safe-water systems across the island. These durable BleachMakers allow health facilities to produce WHO-approved, medical-grade disinfectant using only water, salt, and a simple 12v DC power source — ensuring a steady, local supply even when supply chains collapse or bottled bleach cannot reach affected communities.

By pre-positioning these units and training local teams in manufacturing, safe use, and proper handling, Jamaica can become the first country in the Caribbean to build a preemptive resilience shield: a nationwide capacity to generate medical-grade bleach anytime, anywhere, using only water, salt, and electricity.

"For three decades, we've stood with communities rebuilding from storms, and we've learned that disease can strike faster than outside help arrives," said Mark Hogg, Founder and CEO of WaterStep. "When safe water and disinfectant are available immediately, families are protected. Jamaica is taking bold, preventative action, and we are honored to walk alongside the nation as it strengthens its frontline defenses before another outbreak can take hold."

"The Government of Jamaica, through the Ministry of Health & Wellness is grateful for this donation. As we continue the path of recovery, our aim is to recover stronger, even while maintaining health of the nation. This donation will advance our capacity to care for our people and will play a key role in the services we offer to the public. We are cognizant of the possibility



WaterStep's Founder & CEO Mark Hogg makes remarks at Jamaican press conference.



WaterStep's Founder & CEO Mark Hogg demonstrates the use of the organization's patented BleachMaker to Jamaican officials.

of food and water-borne illnesses, as such, we continue to urge everyone to remain vigilant, as well as provide the necessary enabling tools, some through our donor partners, that can keep our people safe and healthy,” noted Minister of State, Health & Wellness, the Hon. Krystal Lee, MP.

Through hands-on training in manufacturing, usage, and safety protocols, Jamaican health teams will gain the ability to produce disinfectant on demand. Under the direction of the Ministry of Health & Wellness and ODPEM, BleachMakers will be deployed to the communities and facilities where contamination risks and population vulnerabilities are highest. Simple monitoring tools will support tracking of production, distribution, and impact to ensure consistency, reliability, and transparency.

If this system is demonstrated at scale, Jamaica could become the regional model for disaster preparedness — proving that locally produced disinfectant and safe water is a powerful national strategy for protecting lives, strengthening public health systems, and building long-term community resilience across the Caribbean.

For more information about WaterStep, visit www.waterstep.org.

About WaterStep

WaterStep is a U.S.-based INGO that focuses on sustainable solutions to the world’s WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) crisis. Since 1995, WaterStep has evolved from a small service organization to a global leader in safe water technology and innovation. WaterStep has developed simple tools, patented technology, and effective training to empower people and communities to solve their own water and sanitation needs. We provide expert solutions for places where infrastructure is fragile and execution challenges are particularly difficult, especially in slums, rural villages, and in communities responding to natural and manmade disasters. Using our equipment, which has received certification from the Kenyan Bureau of Standards, we teach people how to use salt, nearly any source of water, and a 12v power source to make safe drinking water for the long term.

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