Medicines packed with Izzy Dolls reduce waste while providing health, hope and comfort for children in crisis

Health Partners International Canada builds environmental action into everyday operations

Izzy Doll donation received from Louise on behalf of The Women's Institutes of the Beauce-Appalaches Federation

OAKVILLE, ON, CANADA, June 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For over 30 years, Health Partners International Canada has used hand crafted Izzy Dolls instead of foam to pack medical supplies—giving comfort to children while reducing non-recyclable waste around the world.

Ahead of World Environment Day (June 5), HPIC's approach offers a practical example of environmental action built into everyday operations. The dolls are used as protective packing material, cushioning medical shipments in transit without relying on plastic fillers. Unlike polystyrene—which persists for 500+ years and contributes to ocean and landfill pollution—Izzy Dolls serve a second purpose. When the medicines reach their destination, they are given to children living through conflict, displacement or other crisis situations, bringing comfort and offering a simple reminder that someone cares. Izzy Dolls are often a child's first and only toy.

These small, handmade knitted dolls are created by hundreds of volunteers across Canada. The initiative was inspired by Master Corporal Mark Isfeld, a Canadian peacekeeper whose mother began crafting small dolls for him to give to children he met on missions. After Mark's death in 1994, the tradition was carried on by his comrades and quickly embraced by organizations like HPIC. Over one million Izzy Dolls have been donated to Health Partners International Canada over the years - each one protecting medicine in transit, then bringing comfort to children around the world. By replacing disposable packaging with something purposeful, HPIC has

turned a shipping necessity into a human connection. Small changes like this, repeated across thousands of deliveries, create positive environmental and humanitarian impact, one shipment at a time.

Izzy Doll sooths a frightened child in Kenya clinic

About Health Partners International Canada (HPIC)

Health Partners International Canada is a non-profit humanitarian charity dedicated to increasing access to medicine and restoring health and hope around the world. As the only organization of its kind in Canada, HPIC serves as the charity of choice for gift-in-kind donations from Canada's pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. Through its programs, HPIC equips volunteers, medical mission teams, and humanitarian organizations with Humanitarian Medical Kits (HMKs) and delivers large-scale provisions of medicines and medical supplies to global areas in need. Working with a trusted network of Canadian and global partners, HPIC provides medical relief, emergency response, and healthcare capacity building in vulnerable communities worldwide. Since 1990, HPIC has delivered $750 million worth of medicine for over 35 million people in 130 countries.

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>
> *Lois Brown, President*

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Children in Guatemala with Izzy Dolls

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