

FEMA Approves \$5.6 Million for the Puerto Rico Department of Health

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico— A **\$5.6 million** injection of funds approved to the Puerto Rico Department of Health by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is aimed at repairing health facilities throughout the island. The improvement plans range from diagnostic and treatment centers to laboratories and public health units in six municipalities.

This amount, approved this year, adds to the total of about **\$8 million** the Agency has awarded for the Department of Health so far for 14 permanent repair projects to strengthen the health sector.

“With these funding obligations we contribute to the rehabilitation of various facilities of Puerto Rico's public health system around the island to facilitate the accessibility of these essential services to all citizens,” said the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, José Baquero Tirado.

Among the recent obligations, is a **\$1.2 million** grant for the Mayagüez Pediatric Center, which has an epidemiology office. The facility also houses other offices that provide services to citizens such as the WIC Program, the Demographic Registry, the Biosecurity Office, and the Emergency Management Office, among others. The improvements include mitigation measures to reinforce the windows, doors and roof of the building to prevent similar damage in future disasters.

“This federal assistance will give us the opportunity to improve the facilities of the Mayagüez Pediatric Center and keep the operations in optimal conditions to offer the quality of service that each patient deserves. The health of residents is our priority and a right that we have to respect,” assured the Secretary of Health, Lorenzo González Feliciano.

On the other hand, the Health Department's hygiene laboratory in Arecibo, located in a historic building built in 1938, was awarded nearly \$25,000. These funds are



destined for repairs to its bacteriological and chemical labs, among other work.

Similarly, funds were obligated for other health institutions to repair their facilities and mitigate risks. Among these are Adjuntas' Diagnostic and Treatment Center (CDT, by its Spanish acronym), with about \$2.5 million; as well as the Transitional Service Centers in Cayey and Ponce, with about \$800,000 and \$67,000 respectively.

“Our public health facilities in various sectors will benefit greatly from this assignment, at a time when we are confirming the relevance of the services they offer. We thank the healthcare workers for their great support in these times and hope that this assignment fulfills the essential purpose of serving our citizens,” said the executive director of the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience (COR3), Ottmar Chávez.

To date, FEMA has obligated nearly **\$19.4 billion** for costs related to hurricanes Irma and María, including projects to help rebuild infrastructure throughout Puerto Rico. FEMA works with COR3 through the agency's Public Assistance program to obligate recovery funds to private nonprofit organizations, municipalities and agencies of the Government of Puerto Rico.

For more information on Puerto Rico's recovery from Hurricane María, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339 and recuperacion.pr. Follow us on our social networks at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and [Twitter @COR3pr](https://Twitter.com/COR3pr).

