



SPRING 2021

# REFUGEE HEALTH ALLIANCE — BEYOND BORDERS —

## NEWSLETTER



## To our RHA Community,

We are in need of clinicians with Global Health experience and Spanish proficiency to assist in our weekday clinic at Resistencia y Justicia en Salud, Monday-Thursday 12-5pm.

**Please email us if you are available at:  
[RHA@refugeehealthalliance.org](mailto:RHA@refugeehealthalliance.org)**

Thank you for your continued support during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

# UPDATES ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS AT THE US-MEXICO BORDER

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This complex situation has evolved through a global pandemic and the shifting policies of two administrations, leaving migrants and refugees stranded in an impossible limbo and robbing them of basic necessities and human dignity. Tijuana does not have sufficient resources to respond to a crisis of this magnitude, and the system is already strained. We are committed to not abandoning our patients, but we desperately need your help.

After Biden ended the Migrant Protection Protocol program (known as MPP, or Remain in Mexico), an estimated 30-50,000 people who were sent back to Mexico to await their court dates are now being legally processed. Civil society groups including RHA are working to safely cross asylum-seekers to the U.S. safely pending their asylum claims. 50-100 asylum-seekers are processed on a daily basis, with RHA's medical support.

Thousands of migrants also wait in Mexico secondary to illegal metering practices and Title 42. Under this legal code, hundreds of individuals seeking asylum (except unaccompanied minors), are deported on a daily basis; either back to Mexico to wait in unsafe and overcrowded conditions, or back to their countries of origin; where their lives are at risk due to political unrest, endemic violence, and poverty. Vulnerable groups including black, indigenous, queer, and trans refugees experience aggressive racism and transphobia in Tijuana and have nowhere to turn when they are targeted. 14,000 unaccompanied children are in US custody after being apprehended while crossing the US-Mexico border, with little hope of family reunification.

Donations are desperately needed to provide urgently needed medical services, support overwhelmed shelters in Tijuana, continue medical-legal efforts, and distribute food and basic hygiene kits to migrants and refugees. The majority of RHA's funding goes directly to these efforts.

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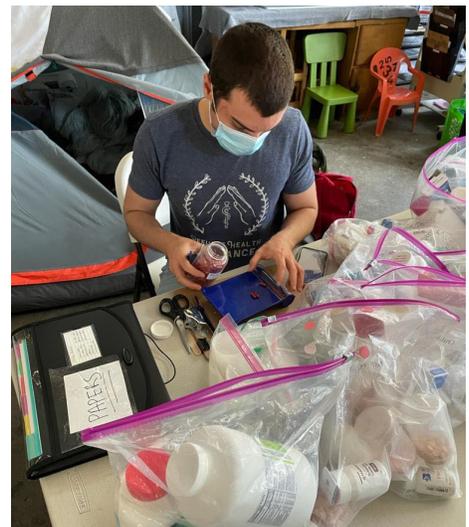
# SATURDAY OUTREACH UPDATE

*RHA relaunched our Saturday outreach to shelters in Tijuana with a limited core team of volunteers.*

In November, we re-launched our Saturday shelter outreach with a limited team. **We now need volunteers to help on Saturdays to be able to increase shelter outreach to more shelters and to increase our frequency from bi-weekly visits to every Saturday.** Over the course of a full weekend, we were able to visit **four shelter sites** and provided care to **300-400 patients!**



If you would like to support our Saturday shelter outreach, **we urgently request folding tables and chairs** which will be used to provide our patients with comfortable, socially distanced consultation spaces while we visit the shelters. To volunteer on the ground, please visit the **“Get Involved”** tab at [www.refugeehealthalliance.org](http://www.refugeehealthalliance.org).



# WATER WORKS PROJECT

***Thanks to generous donations, the first installation of the water fountain and refill station project was initiated by RHA in August 2020 is now completed!***

This project now provides clean drinking water to underserved populations throughout Tijuana, Mexico. The first installation at our main clinic site provides 90 gallons of drinkable water per day to a population that was previously forced to use canal water. The public water fountain and refill station are the first of its kind in the city of Tijuana, but certainly not the last. We will be moving forward with more installations in the coming months.

We have completed drafts of floor plans for future water stations and a volunteer welder available to donate their labor costs! To sponsor the materials for a water fountain installation in whole (\$1000- \$3000 per water fountain), or in part, please donate to RHA and write “water fountain project” in the memo/description.

**“...THE PUBLIC WATER FOUNTAIN AND REFILL STATION WILL BE THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE CITY OF TIJUANA, BUT CERTAINLY NOT THE LAST.”**



# COMMUNITY LAUNDRY & SHOWER SERVICES

*RHA is excited to announce that we are planning an innovative community center project in Northern Tijuana, Mexico*

Personal hygiene is a crucial determinant of physical and mental health. The populations we serve can benefit immensely from access to hygiene resources. This community space, upwards of 1800 sq. ft., will contain 6 personal shower spaces, 4 sets of washers and dryers, and provide clothing donations for those in need. The community center will be an immense undertaking for RHA as estimated costs will be approximately \$70,000 for construction and \$20,000 per year to sustain the project. We are thrilled to begin fundraising for this project and we believe that with your support, this project will break ground soon.

When submitting donations for this project, please write "community hygiene center" in the memo/description.

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## MENTAL HEALTH

*Psychology First Aid and Referrals for Migrants*

### **WE NEED MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS!**

The Refugee Health Alliance Mental Health team is rapidly growing but the need for help is growing even faster. We're looking for more volunteers who can be involved either remotely online or in-person in Tijuana, Mexico even a couple of hours every 1 to 2 months helps. Task options include writing mental health parole letters (1-page letters by any licensed mental health professional), being on call for a consultation call line, volunteering in-person, providing mental health support, and other tasks as interested. While Spanish and/or Creole-speaking is preferred, it is not required. Folks who aren't clinicians but can translate or help with technical issues are also welcome. Please complete this **form** if you're interested or email [rhabienestar@gmail.com](mailto:rhabienestar@gmail.com)

***We're seeking a Psychiatrist once a month to assist patients who have repeatedly sought mental health services***

# PRENATAL AND MIDWIFERY

***With multiple anticipated births every month, [Clinica de Justicia en Salud](#), urgently requests donations for necessary supplies***

In February and March, about 60% of our patients crossed into the US or were deported to their countries. Currently, at [Clinica de Justicia en Salud](#), we are seeing between 20 to 25 patients daily, four days a week and anywhere between 4 to 8 births monthly, in the birthing house and about 12 more births that we have accompanied to the local hospitals. The hospitals are still under-resourced and so we have collaborated donating medical supplies and basic medicines needed with every delivery we accompany. This has been the best way to get our patients taken care of without identification and later we work to help get them their birth certificates.

***Please consider donating to our prenatal care [GoFundMe](#) to help us continue to provide prenatal and postpartum care to this community.***



# FOOD INSECURITY INITIATIVES

*RHA has continued working with **Comidas no Bombas** and **Contra Viento y Marea**, a local food kitchen. We need your help for this project to continue through 2021.*

We provide one free meal every day of the week in Zona Rio to those in need. Our funding provides between **260-280 individuals with a full meal each week**. We have also expanded our partnership with Comida no Bombas to offer an additional 45 lunches per week to be served directly to our patients at Justicia and Resistencia en Salud.

If you have any connections to food distributions in the United States who are looking for soup kitchens to donate to, send them in our direction as there is a lot of need in Tijuana, Mexico.

With increasing needs Under Title 42, we are going to be further assisting to provide warm meals at a few shelters. We are establishing new services in view of COVID-19, which includes but is not limited to restructuring our budget, but we can't do it without your help. When submitting donations for this project, please write "food insecurity initiative" in the memo/description.



## MEDICAL-LEGAL EFFORTS

Refugee Health Alliance continues to collaborate with local legal organizations such as **ImmDef**, **Al Otro Lado**, and **Jewish Family Services** as well as with an array of private attorneys to complete independent medical evaluations for asylum seekers in Tijuana. When clinic or shelter patients are medically vulnerable or if an independent evaluation deems them to be so, a humanitarian parole request can be made such that they can cross the border with their family to await their asylum cases in the United States where they have better access to care. Since January, RHA has completed over 150 evaluations and medical parole letters with success in the vast majority of cases. RHA has its own asylum evaluation clinic and has been partnering with the **Keck Asylum Clinic** to complete around 3 formal forensic evaluations per month for patients referred by legal partners. Lastly, RHA has been working with **Physicians for Human Rights** to speak out about the harmful health effects of Title 42 and other US policies that continue to place our patients in harm's way.

We are always in need of volunteer clinicians to help conduct these evaluations and write medical letters, particularly Pediatricians and/or Family Medicine clinicians. We are planning to host an upcoming training for those interested. Look out for more on this soon!

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## USA NETWORK OF REFUGEE FRIENDLY AND TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS SURVEY

We are seeking to develop a network of providers and services in the USA that are refugee-friendly for when migrants cross into the USA. The goal of this project is to provide continued care and linkages to the services they need.

Please complete and spread this survey widely:

<https://tinyurl.com/USMigrantServices>

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

***RHA is actively seeking new volunteers to join our organization, take a look at some of the opportunities available:***

## **Grants and Partnerships Coordinator:**

Refugee Health Alliance is looking for Grants and Partnerships Coordinators to help us both apply to grants and raise money for our work, and also to build relationships and collaborations with organizations in the US and Tijuana. We are looking for dedicated health justice advocates with excellent writing skills to help us raise the money that helps us do the work we are doing in Tijuana! Previous grant writing experience is preferred, but not required. Please send us a sample of your writing (either with a previous grant application or another persuasive essay/writing piece) along with completing this [application](#). Note, speaking Spanish is not required for this position.

## **On-the-ground Saturday Shelter Coordinator:**

Currently, we are looking for individuals interested in joining our organization as an on-the-ground coordinator to help organize our mobile Saturday outreach clinics that take place at various shelters across Tijuana, MX. Our ideal candidate must have a 6-month commitment, reliable transportation to the border, and is able to speak Spanish. Please see our [position description](#) and [the link to our application](#) if you are interested in joining RHA!

## **General Volunteers (Weekday Clinic and Saturday Shelter Outreach)**

We need support more than ever to help everyone arriving at the border during these times. Are you interested in making a difference? Want to get some experience on the ground?

Please visit the "Get Involved" tab at [www.refugeehealthalliance.org](http://www.refugeehealthalliance.org)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- UCLA Emergency Medicine physicians will be providing a course on point-of-care ultrasound for local RHA providers that will kick off on June 5th. If anyone has the availability to teach, interpret, model, or donate ultrasound supplies or equipment please email [hjaneway@refugeehealthalliance.org](mailto:hjaneway@refugeehealthalliance.org)
  - **Saturday Shelter Outreach Dates:** 5/15, 5/29, 6/12, 6/26
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## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### [RHA GoFundMe:](#)

Donate directly to our efforts through our GoFundMe! We are working closely with shelter leadership to make sure that they are equipped and informed to handle this pandemic. We are collaborating closely with other local organizations to help direct patients in need of additional resources to the organizations that can provide them.

### [Telemedicine Mental Health GoFundMe:](#)

To support our efforts, you can donate!

### [Prenatal Care GoFundMe:](#)

Support materials for prenatal care is through our prenatal [Amazon Wishlist](#)

### [RHA Amazon Wishlist:](#)

Current needs include glucometers, sweatshirts, blankets, sweaters, and socks.

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## DONOR APPRECIATION

***A huge THANK YOU to the following donors that help us continue serving our community!***

*MARGOT TISHER*

*BOZEMAN AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION - SAS AND STUART WEBER FUND*

*MONICA LAVERY*

*CHOOSE LOVE*

*MARY SCHIPPER AND TOM TRIGG*

*ALEX CHUNG*



## REFUGEE HEALTH ALLIANCE (RHA)

*A belief in the health and dignity of every individual.*

*Share and Follow*



Feedback is always appreciated! Submit a form [here](#) or email us at <RHA@refugeehealthalliance.org>.

Any concerns can also be *anonymously* reported to our ethics committee.