FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Direct Relief Donates Supplies to Help with the Health Impacts of the Kīlauea Eruption

HILO, HAWAI’I, June 20, 2018 — Bay Clinic requested help with the increased health effects of the Kīlauea Volcano East Rift Zone eruption and Direct Relief responded with a donation of medical supplies to help with the health impacts of the ash and vog.

The East Rift Zone eruption started on May 3, 2018 and has destroyed 533 homes and covered 5,914 acres, more than the notable lava eruption event of 1955. Running at 17 mph, the fast moving lava has been ongoing for nearly seven weeks and it's unclear how much longer it could last. The lava has reached the ocean creating laze, a mix of hydrochloric acid fumes, steam and fine volcanic glass specks created when erupting lava reacts with sea water. The cloud could extend as far as 15 miles and a small amount can cause eye and respiratory irritation.

Elevated SO2 emissions and Pele’s Hair (volcanic glass fibers or thin strands of volcanic glass) are affecting air quality in and around the communities in the lower Puna District. Changing wind patterns have also impacted air quality in Pāhoa, Hilo, and Kona as well. The eruption event has caused widespread increase in respiratory conditions and other health concerns, particularly for people living with chronic health conditions.

As a result of the increased demand for health services related to the eruption, Bay Clinic asked Direct Relief for assistance and they responded with donations of N-95 masks, safety glasses, and medical supplies such as nebulizer solution for asthma treatment and eye wash. The N-95 masks and safety glasses are being provided free to our patients at our Kea'au, Pāhoa, and Ka'ū clinics while supplies last.

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About Bay Clinic, Inc.:
Bay Clinic, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Federally Qualified Health Center with 180 employees in 9 sites. Serving over 22,000 patients, Bay Clinic is a community-directed healthcare organization that provides quality primary and preventive care services to the people of East Hawaiʻi. Bay Clinic will ensure that patient-centered, culturally responsive, and affordable healthcare services are locally accessible in our communities. Learn more about Bay Clinic, Inc. at www.bayclinic.org.

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