

Haitian relief highlights the power of text messaging

By nversel

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Editor's Corner:

You're no doubt aware by now of the myriad text-messaging campaigns to donate money for Haiti earthquake relief. As of Monday morning, the American Red Cross had raised \$21 million this way [1], \$10 at a time, and that was before a telethon on CNN last night netted another \$5 million for the Red Cross and UNICEF [2].



Neil Versel

To give, all you have to do is send a text message to a short code (five or six digits) to the charity of your choice. You get an immediate response to confirm your intent to donate. Just send back the confirmation message and the donation is automatically added to your cellular bill. There's no paperwork to fill out or credit-card numbers to enter. It's simple, quick and discreet.

There, of course, is nothing simple or discreet about the situation in Haiti, and it could be argued that the damage wasn't quick, but rather the result of decades of crushing poverty that was only compounded by the massive quake. What little medical and technological infrastructure Haiti had before the temblor was all but destroyed a week ago, though some high-tech relief is on its way, as I describe in my *FierceHealthIT* column today [3].

Others in mobile healthcare seem to be stepping up to the plate, as well. This morning, we learned that Ewing, N.J.-based iSeek Medical will donate 20 percent of this month's sales of its iSeek Medical Mobile software [4] to Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) and will provide free access on iPhone, BlackBerry and Palm smartphones to caregivers in Haiti and other emergency-response areas. I trust other vendors will follow suit. - Neil [5]

Source URL:

<http://www.fiercemobilehealthcare.com/story/haitian-relief-highlights-power-text-messaging/2010-01-19>

Links:

[1] <http://twitter.com/RedCross/status/7911678667>

[2] <http://www.gather.com/viewArticle.action?articleId=281474978001992&grpId=3659174697259616&nav=Groupspace>

[3] <http://www.fiercehealthit.com/story/health-it-helps-haiti/2010-01-19>

[4] <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2010/01/prweb3463684.htm>

[5] <mailto:nversel@fiercemarkets.com>