Venezuela

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (916,446 square kilometers) is organized in 23 states and a district capital. According to the latest data available from the Global Health Observatory, Venezuela counts with a population of 31,108,000, 93.5% of whom live in urban areas.

According to the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, healthcare is a fundamental social right, and the government has the obligation to guarantee it (Article 83). In order to do this, there is a National Public Health System, controlled by the Ministry of Health and Social Development, based on the principles of free service, universality, integrity, equity, social integration, and solidarity (Article 84). Finally, the constitution states that financial support for the National Public Health System is a responsibility of the state (Article 85), and that everyone has the right to social security as a public, non-lucrative service that warrants health and protection against different contingencies (Article 86).

There are 296 public hospitals; 214 of which are integrated into the National Public Health System, and the rest are integrated into several different public organizations. There are 344 private hospitals, of which 29 are nonprofit organizations. By the year 2000, there were 40,675 hospitalization beds integrated into the National Public Health System (17.6 beds per 10,000 inhabitants), with more than 50% of those in the five most developed states.

The Venezuelan refugee crisis (also known as the Bolivarian diaspora), is the largest recorded refugee crisis in the Americas since the revolution began in 1999. A late-2018 study by the Brookings Institution suggested that emigration would reach 6 million – approximately 20% of Venezuela’s 2017 population – by the end of 2019, according to other studies this number has already been exceeded. Large percentage of these emigrants are high educated professionals, including clinical and biomedical engineers.

According to a 2019 report from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the international group Human Rights Watch. "The situation in Venezuela is dire... patients who go to the hospital need to bring not only their own food but also medical supplies like syringes and scalpels as well as their own soap and water". Water and electricity are failing, medical devices are ceasing to operate, there are no spare parts, technicians or engineers to take care of the devices, in synthesis, echoing the Johns Hopkins report, the clinical engineering situation in Venezuela is dire!

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