

Project fiche:

A Hand on the Heart - 1000 Pacemakers for Cuba

General objective:

To ensure that all individuals in Cuba who need a pacemaker can receive one with minimal waiting time.

Specific objective:

To secure the necessary single- and dual-chamber pacemakers in Cuba, preventing patients in urgent need from having to remain hospitalized due to a lack of available devices.

Expected Results:

1. Shipment of Pacemakers: Deliver a total of 1,000 pacemakers to Cuba between 2024 and 2025.
2. Reduction in Long-Term Hospitalizations: Eliminate long-term hospitalizations in Cuba due to patients waiting for pacemakers.
3. Established Supply Channel: Develop a stable and reliable supply channel for pacemakers to complement the Ministry of Health's purchases, ensuring that every patient in need receives a pacemaker.

Problematic:

In April 2024, Cuban health authorities presented to MediCuba-Europa an urgent need for pacemakers to address the gap between the demand and the equipment acquired by the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP). The gap was estimated to be several hundred devices, with the most critical cases involving patients who are currently hospitalized due to the lack of available pacemakers.

This issue:

- **Affects Individuals and Families:** Patients and their families are significantly impacted by the lack of available pacemakers.
- **Burden on the Healthcare System:** The healthcare system is burdened with patients who need to be monitored and could otherwise be discharged and contributing economically. This situation incurs costs for the healthcare system and occupies resources such as beds, medications, medical equipment, and staff that could be utilized for other patients.
- **Hinders Economic and Social Activities:** The inability to access pacemakers prevents patients and, in some cases, their families from fully engaging in their economic and social activities.

Health authorities have specifically requested that support focus on single- and dual-chamber pacemakers, as these are the most commonly used.

In response, MediCubaEuropa has decided to launch the campaign "**A HAND ON THE HEART**" to ensure a stable and predictable supply of pacemakers to the Cuban health system throughout 2024 and 2025. This initiative aims to address the most urgent needs and provide pacemakers to patients who would otherwise face prolonged hospitalization and monitoring

Current situation:

In partnership with the US organization Global Health Partner (GHP), MediCubaEurope (mCE) is committed to providing the Cuban health system with a total of 1,000 pacemakers for an equal number of patients between 2024 and 2025. This initiative addresses the critical shortage of these vital devices.

As of August 2024, GHP has successfully raised funds for 500 pacemakers. MediCubaEurope has used contributions from various supportive organizations and individuals to order 200-250 single and dual-chamber pacemakers for 2024. To date, 80 dual-chamber pacemakers have been shipped to Cuba (subject to supplier availability), and an additional 200 single-chamber devices are scheduled for shipment in September.

The pacemakers received have been distributed by the Cuban Ministry of Health (MINSAP) according to a pre-established plan, and are being utilized in various hospitals. MINSAP provides all necessary supplies and qualified personnel for surgeries and patient care. For example, of the 50 dual-chamber devices shipped in July, 30 were distributed to three hospitals in Havana, while 20 units were transferred to hospitals in Holguín and Santiago de Cuba.

The campaign, "**A Hand on the Heart**," has also garnered media attention: [Read the article here](#).

Looking ahead, MediCuba-Europe aims to secure additional funding to ship at least 300 more single- and dual-chamber pacemakers during 2025.

Potential impacts:

By addressing the needs of 1,000 individuals and their families (approximately 6,000 people), the project resolves a critical issue and ensures their right to health.

Key Outcomes:

- **Health Assurance:** The urgent needs of 1,000 patients are met, guaranteeing their access to necessary cardiac care and improving their quality of life.
- **Relief for Hospitals:** Cuban hospitals are relieved from the burden of managing hundreds of patients with acute cardiac issues who otherwise would be waiting for extended periods for pacemakers.
- **Restoration of Activities:** Patients who have undergone surgery can return to their economic and social activities, contributing positively to their communities and reducing the strain on the healthcare system.

Duration: July to December 2024 for the first phase
January to October 2025 for the second phase

Budget:

Estimated at 660,000 euros in total - 440,000 euros in 2024 and 220,000 euros in 2025 for:

- 800 single-chamber devices at 550 euros
- 200 bicameral devices at 1000 euros
- Logistics and transport costs

The ratio 800 / 200 may vary according to the needs and priorities of the Cuban Ministry of Health.

Funding:

mediCubaEuropa has covered 200-250 devices that have arrived or are due to arrive in Cuba by the end of 2024 with the proceeds raised to date.

GHP has raised the funds and commissioned 500 devices (some of which have already arrived in Cuba - an estimated 180 by the end of 2024).

Therefore, the need for the year 2025 to be covered as mediCubaEurope is:

100	two-chambered pacemakers priced at 1,000 euros each:	100.000 Euro
200	single-chamber pacemakers priced at 550 euros each:	110,000 Euro

Adding management and logistical costs, this results in a target of **220,000 euros**.

"To put our hands on our hearts".

Monitoring and reporting:

mediCuba Europe has the experience, the contacts and the capacity with its representation in Cuba and the Secretariat in Switzerland to follow up the project and to provide donors with regular reports and a final report.

August, 2024