



# UPS Healthcare

Quality Focused. Patient Driven.

## Help for helping hands

### UPS Healthcare speeds an NGO's healing COVID-19 supplies to South Africans



#### Sometimes, a helping hand needs help.

Humanitarian aid must quickly reach people in challenging circumstances – following natural disasters, for example, or as relief for those affected by armed conflict or disease outbreaks (including pandemics).

Humanitarian logistics travel by plane, train, and automobile ... or on ships, bikes, motorcycles, pack animals, even drones. Whatever it takes. Aid products may arrive supported by dry ice, smart sensors, advanced tracking technology, customs/brokerage easements, or other features that speed supplies, uncompromised, to people who need them.

A recent medical supplies delivery by UPS illustrates the distinctive complexity of humanitarian logistics ...and the value of specialized expertise, infrastructure, and experience in solving problems.

The project had a significant side benefit: It saved lives.

"This work feels good," says Chris Larson, Director of Humanitarian Logistics for UPS Healthcare. "It gives you a reason to get out of bed and get to work in the morning ... or to stay up late at night."

#### Xinwu to Johannesburg

In August 2020, Larson and his team guided a shipment of COVID-19 lab tests and personal protective equipment (PPE) from a collection of manufacturers in the Xinwu District of China to waiting clinics and patients in South Africa.

An African NGO (non-governmental organization) associated with the Africa Centers for Disease Control purchased the commodities through an online medical supply platform that connects lower-income countries to suppliers. The group then reached out to UPS Healthcare and its global team

Thanks to 15 years of work in humanitarian logistics, we had an experienced and global UPS team to plan and manage all aspects of the shipments.



of over 5,500 healthcare professionals who could support with the delivery of humanitarian shipments.

"Everybody was scrambling at that time to buy PPE," says Larson. "Thanks to 15 years of work in humanitarian logistics, we had an experienced and global UPS team to plan and manage all aspects of the shipments. Also, the experience UPS gained in 2020 exporting PPE out of China for FEMA established know-how and relationships to make sure aid products could leave that country and arrive in South Africa with minimal delays and red tape."



The shipment of COVID-19 tests required an unbroken cold chain at temperatures as low as -70 degrees Celsius. UPS meticulously coordinated the processes of obtaining an export permit, storing dry ice, and scheduling the airlift. Advanced shipping technology allowed minute-by-minute monitoring of refrigerated trucks from factories to airports, then on flights from China to Singapore, where packages were re-iced. Flights continued to Johannesburg, with another icing there to insure the integrity of sensitive contents prior to delivery.

## Solving problems before they happen

On the PPE side, transportation logistics were “pretty straightforward,” Larson says. “Thanks to the experience of our UPS partners in China in obtaining the necessary export permits for COVID-19 commodities, we were able to avoid lengthy delays.”

China had recently tightened its export regimes to prevent any sub-standard PPE from leaving the country. Because a third-party NGO made the purchase, UPS had to coordinate among that agent and Chinese manufacturers on shipping requirements – the nature of cargo, certifications of analysis and conformity, a commercial invoice, and information on packing/shipping details.

“When UPS works directly with a manufacturer, this information is easily available, part of everyday business,”

Larson says. “We understood that a NGO would be new to the process, so our UPS partners in China worked directly with the manufacturer to handle critical shipping issues and move things quickly along.”

On the South African side, UPS applied its distinctive knowledge of that nation’s customs and regulations to smooth the entry of supplies.

“Our UPS partners in South Africa are experienced in clearing duty-free shipments of donated goods,” Larson says. “They worked directly with the consignee to smoothly complete the shipping process.”



## The whole world in its humanitarian hands

The global scale of UPS, which operates in 220 countries and territories, means that infrastructure and local expertise are always close at hand.

The global know-how applies to all kinds of humanitarian missions. UPS Healthcare leverages expertise to handle HIV and malaria drugs for nations in Africa, plus reproductive health supplies and other medical and relief shipments.

“The need for this work just grows and grows,” Larson says, “and so does our responsibility.”

“We can rapidly ramp up our scale and deliver humanitarian supplies anywhere,” Larson says. “Handling complex, ultra-cold shipments for South Africa convincingly demonstrates the effectiveness of our cold chain packaging solutions. Clearly, we’re able and ready to deliver super-cold, time-sensitive COVID-19 vaccines to low- and middle-income countries anywhere in the world.”

Organizations that don’t ship routinely may not be aware of complicated regulations or tax-and-revenue issues at customs. These can prevent even well-meant humanitarian aid from coming into a nation.

“When that happens,” Larson says, “delays and storage fees can really mount up ... and put time-sensitive shipments at risk.”

Larson adds, “The thing you never want is for humanitarian goods to reach the country where they’re needed and not be able to clear customs. In most cases, UPS moves shipments from the site of origin once all destinations are formalized and products registered. It’s a lot better to hold things at the point of origin until you are prepared at the destination, avoiding potential spoilage or delay.”

Clearly, we’re able and ready to deliver super-cold, time-sensitive COVID-19 vaccines to low- and middle-income countries anywhere in the world.