

SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER



Children's Global
Health Fund

Supporting Clínica de Familia La Romana



September 2026

Clínica de Familia La Romana continues to grow and expand its impact across the eastern region of the Dominican Republic, supported by the Children's Global Health Fund, donors, partners, and its dedicated team. In this newsletter, we are celebrating the start of construction on our new health center, expanded medical services, community initiatives, and programs focused on HIV prevention and adolescent mental health. These milestones reflect the strength of a shared vision to improve health and create greater opportunities for the families and communities Clínica de Familia serves.



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Building the Future of Community Healthcare



For years, we envisioned what expanded healthcare access could look like for our community, and earlier this year, that vision took root as construction officially began on our new health center, set to open in 2028. This project goes far beyond brick and mortar; we are constructing a modernized facility designed to transform healthcare delivery for thousands of families across the Eastern Dominican Republic by significantly increasing our clinical capacity and broadening our range of specialized services. While our facilities are evolving, our core mission remains unchanged: delivering comprehensive, human-centered medical care to every client who walks through our doors, including the most vulnerable individuals. Every stage of construction brings us closer to expanding our reach, improving health outcomes, and opening a vital new chapter for La Romana.

Research Update

In August, Clínica de Familia La Romana, with the generous support and collaboration of the Grodman Family Foundation, launched a study to evaluate mental health among youth aged 15 to 18 in La Romana. The initiative will assess 300 young people for symptoms of anxiety and depression using a UNICEF-developed tool. To prioritize care throughout the process, mental health professionals are actively supporting participants, interpreting results, and connecting those in need to Clínica de Familia's comprehensive mental health services. This research will not only deepen our understanding of local youth mental health needs, but will also help validate an assessment tool that can be scaled to benefit health centers nationwide.

Program Updates

Community Health Outreach: In August, Clínica de Familia brought comprehensive, high-quality healthcare directly into the community through a full-scale medical outreach day. Hundreds of clients received specialized consultations and diagnostic imaging, alongside essential preventive care provided in partnership with key healthcare allies. Through mobile units provided by the National Health Service, community members accessed life-saving mammography and breast ultrasound screenings, while an external laboratory offered vital bone density evaluations. By removing barriers to care, this initiative underscored the Clinic's unwavering commitment to early detection, disease prevention, and holistic community well-being.

Grant Updates: In July, Clínica de Familia La Romana received notification that our U.S. State Department funding, administered by FHI 360, was officially terminated on just four days' notice. This final decision follows a tumultuous period since January 2025, when funding was first suspended, then reinstated, and subsequently subject to continuous fluctuations. While we have navigated this period of extreme unpredictability with resilience, this sudden loss creates a substantial financial shortfall for both 2026 and 2027. Now more than ever, the steadfast commitment of our donor community will be essential to bridge this unexpected gap and protect the vital healthcare services our clients depend on every day. At the same time, Clínica de Familia launched a major new grant in June to strengthen support for vulnerable populations. Funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria through the

Dominican NGO COIN, this 24-month project, titled Comprehensive HIV/STI Care and Prevention for Key Populations in La Romana, aims to expand access to inclusive, stigma-free healthcare. Over the next two years, the initiative will deliver vital HIV and STI prevention services alongside essential primary care for key populations across the province.



Summer Camp: This summer, 121 children and adolescents stepped into vibrant spaces of learning, laughter, and belonging across four summer camps hosted by Clínica de Familia. At Rancho Amalia in Higüey, 39 youth living with HIV gathered for the annual Camp Hope and Joy—a cherished tradition since 2005—with dedicated days tailored specifically for children and adolescents, where they enjoyed dynamic activities, games, and pool time in a supportive, stigma-free environment. In addition, two camps were held for the second year in an underserved, rural community, engaging 82 preteens and adolescents with interactive education, teamwork, and play. These transformative experiences were made possible through the generosity of our donors and the extraordinary dedication of our staff, youth peer educators, Peace Corps volunteers, and community partners who work tirelessly to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.

In Memoriam: Dr. Ellen Koenig



We are deeply saddened to announce the death of Dr. Ellen Levy Koenig on June 22, 2026, in Santo Domingo. She was the former director of the Dominican Republic National Laboratory, and she founded the Instituto Dominicano de Estudios Viroológicos (IDEV) in 2000 as a care, treatment and research center for individuals with HIV. From the program's beginning, IDEV served as an important source of support and collaboration for Clínica de Familia La Romana.

Before coming to the Dominican Republic, Dr. Koenig trained in microbiology at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia with Drs. Werner and Gertrude Henle, who in 1936 escaped Nazi Germany and brought with them the nascent field of virology. Dr. Koenig's brother, Dr. Jay Levy, also trained under the Henles before going to the University of California San Francisco, where in 1983 he independently discovered the AIDS virus, which he called Lymphadenopathy-Associated Virus (later renamed HIV).

Early in her tenure at the Dominican Republic National Laboratory, while conducting one of the first studies of the prevalence of HIV in Dominicans and Haitians in the Dominican Republic, Dr. Koenig discovered that doctors were refusing to care for people with HIV. While maintaining her lab position, with the goal of becoming an HIV doctor, she applied to medical school at UNIBE and was awarded an M.D. in 1991. She quickly became one of the leading AIDS specialists, caring for the largest number of people with HIV in the country.

Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Koenig served as a devoted mentor and teacher to generations of physicians, nurses, and healthcare professionals, leaving an indelible mark on all who had the privilege of learning from her. Dr. Ellen Koenig's warmth, brilliance, and unwavering commitment to public health leave an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire our community and work for years to come.

Mission in Action

Kimberly arrived at Clínica de Familia in 2007 at just 18 months old, carried in her grandmother's arms. She had been referred from a children's hospital, where she was hospitalized with pneumonia and severe undernutrition. As part of her medical evaluation, she tested positive for HIV. From that moment, the Clínica de Familia team immediately activated a comprehensive care plan, providing medical care, psychological support, and social services for both Kimberly and her family. Kimberly had acquired HIV through vertical transmission, but because her mother did not accept the diagnosis, her grandmother assumed responsibility for her care and ensured that she received ongoing treatment and follow-up.

Through the Social Work Department, Kimberly received food assistance, nutritional supplements, and transportation to attend her medical appointments. She also benefited from the close support of the Community Health Promotion team. Her community health promoter became a key figure in her life, guiding her grandmother on the importance of treatment adherence and helping prepare Kimberly for enrollment in school when she turned four years old.

Throughout her childhood, Kimberly responded well to treatment and grew into a happy, vibrant child. However, new challenges emerged during adolescence. Her grandmother did not consent to the disclosure of Kimberly's HIV diagnosis, which directly affected her adherence to treatment. Over time, Kimberly began refusing her medications and missing medical appointments, despite the team's continued efforts to engage her in her own care.

As a result of this poor adherence, Kimberly developed an opportunistic illness. She was diagnosed with a chronic ear infection that became severely complicated, leading to cerebral edema.



Her condition was critical. She required admission to the intensive care unit and emergency brain surgery. At that point, her life was in danger. Yet Kimberly showed extraordinary resilience. With the continuous support of the Clínica de Familia team, she overcame this life-threatening episode. This experience became a turning point, and with the guidance of the mental health team, the process of disclosing her HIV diagnosis was finally carried out.

Today, Kimberly is a resilient young woman who is committed to her health. She remains adherent to her treatment, continues regular medical follow-up, including ongoing care for her hearing health, and receives consistent support from her community health promoter. She has also found a safe and supportive space through the Mental Health Department, where her community psychologist continues to accompany her on her journey.

Kimberly has built a stronger, more stable relationship with her grandmother and is moving forward with determination toward her future. She is now 19 years old, is completing high school, and is a candidate for a university scholarship. With gratitude, she recognizes the fundamental role that Clínica de Familia has played in her life. Today, her story is a testament to resilience, compassionate care, and hope, demonstrating that with the right support, it is possible to overcome even the most difficult moments and build a future full of opportunity.

Meet Franklin Mármol, Clínica de Familia's Medical Director



My name is Franklin Mármol, and I have been the Medical Director at Clínica de Familia since June 2025.

I enjoy working at Clínica de Familia because it creates a dynamic environment where every team member shares the same goal: the well-being of our clients. The energy of a team that is willing to give its very best is contagious and inspires everyone to continue working with the same enthusiasm.

Seeing a client who needs our help and being able to provide that support is one of the things that motivates me in my work. I want our patients to feel that they are in a safe environment where they are not only seeking to improve their health but can also feel at ease. I am also motivated by the opportunity to share with students what patient-centered medical care can look like and the impact that quality, compassionate care can have.

At Clínica de Familia, every day we strive to improve the lives of our clients through empathy and by putting ourselves in their shoes. We understand that every recommendation we make should be tailored to each individual, taking into account their personal history and circumstances.

I firmly believe in the impact our work has on the health and well-being of every person who walks through our doors.

The Children's Global Health Fund has earned the 2025 Gold Seal of Transparency on Candid (formerly GuideStar). One hundred percent of donations to the Children's Global Health Fund directly support Clínica de Familia La Romana, covering approximately 32% of their budget.

Our relationship with Clínica de Familia La Romana

Children's Global Health Fund is a 501c3 charitable organization with the mission to save the lives of vulnerable children and families globally by raising funds for and providing support to organizations improving family health in developing countries. Our current priority is Clínica de Familia La Romana, an internationally recognized model for patient care, professional education and training, an clinical research.

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