

# Puerto Rico, Maria, and FRIO®

FRIO® is different from other medication coolers because it never needs ice packs or refrigeration. This differentiator cuts the invisible chain to refrigeration, allowing a person that is dependent on insulin the convenience and freedom that he could never possibly enjoy before.

The greatest benefit of the FRIO®, however, is immediately realized when a disaster hits - and electricity and refrigeration are not available. FRIO® will keep a person's life-sustaining medications, such as insulin, cool and safe. It saves lives.

For this reason, we knew that when Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico - and wiped out her entire power grid - it was our responsibility to get as many FRIO®s out to those who need them, as quickly as we possibly could. Through the combined efforts of amazing people, amazing organizations, and amazing companies, this goal was accomplished. We shipped nearly 25,000 FRIO®s to Puerto Rico in the days, weeks, and months after the hurricane. With a population of 3.4 million and an estimated 1% rate of Type 1 Diabetes, this combined effort has, for all practical purposes, solved the problem of keeping insulin cool and safe for the entire Island.

The following is a brief description of the wonderful experience that we had in accomplishing this goal.

In the day and days after the hurricane hit, we attempted to contact the largest government and private organizations through which we thought we could help. It became quickly evident that the larger the organization, the more difficult it was – and the longer it would take to get something done. We also considered simply sending FRIO®s directly to Puerto Rico. We quickly learned, however, that in those early days, there was no way to ship the FRIO®s to the island. Normal courier services (USPS, FedEx, UPS, DHL) were not operational. Furthermore, we lacked of a way to ensure proper distribution – to ensure that those who needed the FRIO®s would get them.

We then reached out to the Diabetes coalition of JDRF, ADA, and Insulin for Life. While we were hoping to work with the coalition on a larger scale, we were able to donate a sizable amount of FRIO®s that Insulin for Life was able to distribute to the island.

More was needed to be done – and on a much larger scale. We needed to find other ways to reach out. And then it happened. There was a flurry of news reports highlighting this exact problem as one of the most urgent issues on the island. Suddenly everybody was reaching out to us! Within a couple days, we received nearly 200 calls and emails, mostly from FRIO® users, asking us to help and how they could help Puerto Rico. As we were figuring out how to make this happen, the answer came to us! Linda Popky from the JDRF reached out to Tamar Sofer-Geri from Carb DM and Lisa Katzki from our company. They set up a fundraising link on the CarbDM website. We could now send all of those who wanted to help to this site. Within no time, the site raised thousands of dollars, raised by hundreds of donors, to fund a thousand FRIO®s for Puerto Rico. Yankee All-Star catcher Jorge Posada arranged transportation and the Chair of the Board of the Puerto Rico Diabetes Association, Dr. Luis Perez arranged distribution in Puerto Rico (click on [link](#)).

There were many other established and newly-established grass roots organizations around the country that did the same thing. They also raised funds from hundreds of generous donors and sponsored FRIO®s to be sent to Puerto Rico.

The private sector also rose to the occasion – big time. A healthcare company chartered a private plane and sent 1,000 FRIO®s and other emergency supplies to its constituents in Puerto Rico. The international pharmaceutical company, Sanofi, was the most generous savior of all - sponsoring 15,000 FRIO®s - to be handed out to those in Puerto Rico who needed them!

As mail and courier services came back on line, capitalism also played its part. A large established distributor purchased nearly two thousand FRIO®s for pharmacies on the island. New distributors also emerged to help fill this obvious need.

It was wonderful for us to be a part of – one gear in the works – that solved this problem for an entire population. This experience has highlighted the need for anyone dependent on temperature-sensitive medications to prepare for emergencies. If not now, when?