

ECONOMY

Healthcare Stalwarts Employ Triage Response to Remember



Think Strategically: HIMA-San Pablo's Life-Saving Response

Stocks not Ready to Make 'Burgers Out of the Bull'; Life-Saving Efforts Chronicled as Caribbean Rebuilds

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The Week in the Markets: Bull market taps 429% total return

Last week, the bull market reached what seemed an unreachable high with 429 percent total return since the current bull market began back in 2009. Most skeptics are pointing to a bear market, but we do not see any evidence in the fundamentals that would make that happen. Thus, in our view, the

market is not ready to make burgers from the bull market. U.S. stocks ended the week with substantial increases as the market indicators closed for the most part in positive territory, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average stood at 26,743.50, a high gain of 588.83 for the week and a year-to-date return of 8.2 percent. The S&P 500 closed at 2,929.67, a gain of 24.69 for the week and a year-to-date return of 9.6 percent, and the Nasdaq closed at 7,986.06, for a decline of 23.08 for the week and a year-to-date return of 15.7 percent.

Some facts to consider before investing in the bull market:

- The S&P 500 has risen 15 percent from its two-year low, a fair warning that even a bull market is going to have volatility.

- While the Fed might increase rates and trade tensions will continue, in our view, they will add volatility to the market and do not seem to pull the market toward a recession.

- Robust economic growth with little unemployment and increased consumer confidence are all indicators of strong market fundamentals.

- The \$20 trillion U.S. economy is far more dependent on consumer

spending. This trade may not be affected.

Stocks not ready to make 'burgers out of the bull'

We follow stocks that have strong upside potential in the current bull market and are not ready to subside.

The stocks we are watching include Allergan PLC, a pharmaceutical company that produces branded products in several therapeutic areas that include plastic surgery/dermatology, neuroscience, urology, cardiovascular, among others. Fluor Corp., a multinational engineering and construction firm that provides services to the oil and gas, industrial and infrastructure, government and power sectors, and is the largest construction company in the Fortune 500.

Honeywell is a conglomerate that makes everything from Aerospace to Consumer goods. During year-end 2017, earnings fell below expectations, to the tune of minus-65.59 percent. However, this year, the company has dramatically improved profitability, with a cash hoard of \$10.8 billion, and is ready for growth in the years to come. MasTec anticipates record

earnings for 2018 and has a strong work backlog of \$7.6 billion. United-Health Group is fresh from a recent acquisition in Chile, and with a \$256 billion market cap, the corporation is in for continued growth.

The Final Word: HIMA-San Pablo's life-saving humanitarian response

We dedicate this section to celebrate the deeds of others on the anniversary of Hurricane Maria. We want to discuss those whose nature of work makes us take for granted their life-saving efforts. Such is the case with HIMA-San Pablo Hospitals, and truth be told, their increased workload began on Sept. 7, when Hurricane Irma passed north of Puerto Rico and left a trail of destruction across the Caribbean. Most hospitals started to assist neighboring islands as their injured and sick came for healthcare in Puerto Rico, with HIMA-San Pablo receiving patients transferred from:

- St. Thomas & St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands;
- St. Martin/St. Maarten;
- Tortola and Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands.

The two weeks that followed were horrific, and then, on Sept. 20, Puerto Rico was devastated by Hurricane Maria, leaving the island without power and water services, and eliminating communications for most island residents. It is safe to say that Puerto Rico went from the 21st century to the 19th century in a couple of hours. In some municipalities, it destroyed 80 percent of their infrastructure.

A week after Hurricane Maria, or by Sept. 28, a total of 70 percent of Puerto Rico's hospitals were closed.

- HIMA-San Pablo remained operational through its multiple redundancies in backup power that operated 14 to 70 days in the worst cases.

- The hospital had more than 6,000 patients and 800-plus physicians.

- The George Washington University study ordered by the Government of Puerto Rico found the 2,975 excess deaths related to Hurricane Maria in the six months following the storm was 22 percent higher than the number of deaths that would have been expected during that period over a year without the hurricane.

Between Sept. 20, 2017, and Dec. 31, 2017, the mortality rate in Puerto Rico increased 62 percent, mainly through the interruption of medical services.

- As the crisis grew, and while continuing to provide regular hospital services in addition to extended

healthcare services from their facilities, the hospital saw increased need for broad humanitarian efforts.

Management put a plan into action with groups of employees, volunteers and HIMA-San Pablo's humanitarian response, which grew crucial by the minute

The company created a program to provide housing visits to elderly and bed-ridden patients in surrounding areas, and provided food, water and medicine.

HIMA-San Pablo's employees provided clothes, supplies and food.

HIMA-San Pablo had an impact on 35 of 78 municipalities, or 45 percent of the island, with the following results:

Provided medical supplies, clothes, food and water to more than 7,000 families.

Coordinated 13 clinics in eight municipalities, serving 4,305 families.

- Provided continuing services to 373 bedridden patients.

- Donated 3,000 durable medical equipment.

- Facilitated purchase of power generators through Costco.

- Offered the use of washers and dryers at its facilities for those without water/power.

- Military personnel were placed within Caguas and Fajardo hospitals to complement Grupo HIMA-San Pablo's intensive care unit and emergency wards.

While we see hospitals as the go-to place for our healthcare needs, we often overlook the humanitarian crisis that ensued following Hurricane Maria. A whopping 70 percent of Puerto Rico hospitals were unable to operate; we saw HIMA-San Pablo not only perform its regular duties but go above and beyond the call of duty. The group's CEO, Armando J. Rodríguez, says it best: "Our community is Puerto Rico and its well-being is our most important job. To us, it is second nature to take care of anyone in need."

As we recount these actions, we note that thousands of patients were saved during this period and the initiatives of providing health services, had an impact on 45 percent of Puerto Rico's municipalities, and are a sign of complete dedication to saving lives. Our deepest gratitude goes out for the actions of the team at Grupo HIMA-San Pablo and its president & CEO, Armando J. Rodríguez, for a job well done.

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