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AIHA Launches New Partnership to Strengthen Health Management Education in Georgia

USAID-supported Project Will Introduce Health Services Administration Specialization into MBA Programs of Two Leading Universities in Georgia

Tbilisi, Georgia, and Washington, DC, September 24, 2007 — The American International Health Alliance (AIHA) announced last week the formation of a new partnership that will assist the Republic of Georgia to develop a cadre of highly skilled administrators capable of leading the nation's ongoing efforts to improve healthcare service management and delivery.

With support from the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the *Strengthening Healthcare Management Education in Georgia Project* links two Tbilisi-based educational institutions—Caucasus University and the Georgian University of Social Sciences—with the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania.

Together, partners will collaborate to introduce healthcare administration specializations in the fields of hospital administration and health insurance management into the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs offered at the Georgian partner institutions. To this end, their work will initially focus on training faculty, as well developing curricula and related materials for both teachers and students.

A ceremony and informational presentation marking the project launch was held September 21 at the Tbilisi Courtyard Marriott Hotel. Distinguished speakers included Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, Tata Chanturidze; USAID/Caucasus Mission Director Robert Wilson; and AIHA Executive Director James P. Smith. Leading representatives of all three partner institutions discussed the partnership's important role in ensuring Georgia has a health management education program in keeping with international standards. Some 40 national policymakers and representatives of donor organizations, insurance companies, investment groups, and others attended the event.

AIHA's program of volunteer-driven, peer-to-peer partnerships has been an important and successful component of USAID's support to healthcare reform efforts in Georgia and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Since 1992, AIHA has established more than 120 partnerships linking healthcare providers and educators from the United States with counterparts overseas—including 21 in the Caucasus, nine of which are in Georgia. Each one has played a critical role in building health sector capacity at both the national and regional levels.

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