

## CID Project Helps Russian Cities Learn More about Life-Saving Emergency Care Techniques

As part of the Communities for International Development Project (CID) supported by AIHA and World Service of La Crosse, Wisconsin, the three Russian industrial cities of Dubna, Izhevsk, and Snezhinsk recently hosted training workshops in emergency medical services. The trainings targeted physicians and feldshers of local ambulance stations, as well as representatives of a number of organizations that work in close cooperation with emergency services, including firefighters, militia, rescuers, sports coaches, secondary school teachers, and other professionals that perform highly challenging tasks or handle hazardous materials at their work places.

CID is a registered US non-profit organization that evolved from a grass-roots effort of American citizens who wanted to help their Russian counterparts address concerns shared by all communities in both countries, such as safety, health, education, culture, economic development, among other things.

In 2005 AIHA and World Services received funding to implement health-related trainings developed through the successful partnership programs AIHA had been facilitating in Russia over the past 13 years. Through the CID project, nine pairs of US-Russian sister cities are working together to improve specific healthcare service delivery issues that present major concerns to their communities.

"When giving preference to emergency services programs, representatives of three sister-cities in Russia considered specific factors peculiar to their territories," explains Irina Makarova, CID project coordinator. "The cities have a number of enterprises where work conditions are extremely dangerous. At the same time, these cities are situated in areas that are prone to natural disasters such as tornados and floods, which often cause destruction and industrial catastrophes. Lastly, based on statistical data collected in Dubna, work place traumas and poisonings are the leading causes of death among people of working age."



Representatives of the Damage Management Center at the Institute of Nuclear Research in Snezhinsk and deputy head of the City Fire Station No. 3 Aleksey Lipatnikov (in uniform) practice CPR techniques with trainer Maria Borodina, director of the Moscow EMCTC. (Photo: Sergey Vidiakin)

The three cities share other problems as well, Makarova says the average time it takes an ambulance to arrive at the scene of an accident is unacceptably long in each of them and medical workers and first responders lack adequate knowledge and skills to perform effective on-site triage. Similarly, employees of industrial plants and other potentially dangerous enterprises responsible for work safety, as well as school teachers responsible for the welfare of the children they teach, also do not possess adequate knowledge about life-saving emergency procedures.



Maria Borodina facilitates a lecture on trauma management during the EMS workshop in Snezhinsk. (Photo: Sergey Vidiakin)

In response, AIHA arranged for expert trainers from the Moscow and Vladivostok Emergency Medical Services Training Centers (EMSTCs) to conduct the workshops. These centers were established in the mid-1990s through AIHA's now-graduated Moscow/Austin (Texas) and Vladivostok/Richmond (Virginia) partnerships and have a long history of providing state-of-the-art urgent care training to a wide range of first responders and other professionals.

The training curriculum used for the CID workshop combined lectures and hands-on skills-building sessions that gave trainees a chance to practice triage techniques and the principles of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for both children and adults. Participants also learned how to manage patients with different types of traumas, burns, poisoning, and radiation exposure, as well as how to clear obstructed airways and perform coniotomy. Among the many other useful skills they learned, the trainees were taught first aid techniques and even took part in a coordinated disaster response exercise.

As a result of three training workshops, 90 specialists received certificates in basic emergency medicine. These participants praised the quality of the material covered during the classes, as well as the teaching methods used and the qualifications of the trainers. "The high skill level of our trainers and their ability to energize such a big and diverse audience commands great respect," Anatoly Diakonov, head physician of the Izhevsk City Ambulance Station, said upon completion of the course. "Having observed their teaching methods and training techniques, I am dreaming about implementing a similar training program in Izhevsk, particularly because the skills it helps develop are indispensable for every inhabitant of our industrial city. People can learn to save lives under any circumstances," he pointed out.

According to Viktor Smirnov, head engineer of the technical shift at Volga Regional Hydraulic Station, the workshop he attended in Dubna helped dispel a wide-spread misconception that emergency care is something that only qualified medical specialists can provide. "In reality, everything turned out to be much simpler than it seemed. At the beginning, I was afraid I wouldn't be able to understand the terminology or act appropriately during medical manipulations. But the trainers were able to describe the procedures in an easy-to-follow, accessible language," he said. "My biggest surprise was that by the end of the first day I was able to perform procedures that I used to consider extremely complicated. I believe my colleagues at work, and the city in general, would benefit from such skills. The need for this sort of EMS training is enormous." he stressed.

AIHA plans to help three sister cities to establish EMSTCs in their territories, reports Marina Ayvazyan, AIHA program coordinator noting that the first of these centers is scheduled to open its doors in May while the other two will be launched by the end of this year.