

## Tbilisi Conference Showcases 15 Years of Successful Partnerships in the Caucasus Region

AIHA hosted a conference in Tbilisi May 2-3 to highlight 15 successful years of USAID-supported healthcare partnerships and programs in the Caucasus Region. During the event, AIHA paid tribute to the dedicated volunteers and collaborating organizations that have contributed to this success, giving particular attention to the accomplishments of its most recent partnerships in Azerbaijan and Georgia.



At the conference, members of graduated partnerships – such as the Gori-Mtskheta/Milwaukee partnership shown here – were presented with plaques in recognition of their dedicated service during an awards ceremony featuring Vladimer Chipashvili, Rauf Agayev, George Tsereteli, USAID’s Andrea Yates, and AIHA Executive Director James P. Smith.

Georgian Minister of Labor, Health, and Social Affairs Vladimer Chipashvili welcomed participants, saying that AIHA and its partners have been instrumental in his country’s health system reform efforts by helping build much-needed human resource capacity.

“AIHA has trained more than 3,000 people through its workshops and other courses in Georgia, Chipashvili said, citing nursing, neonatal care, infection control, healthcare management, and emergency medicine as key areas of improvement. “AIHA’s partnership model has always focused on our priority issues and, as a result, its programs and activities have corresponded with the needs of the Georgian health system,” he continued.

Professor and Deputy Head of the Azerbaijani Ministry of Health’s Department of Science, Education, and Human Resources Rauf Agayev, Head of the Georgian Parliament’s Committee on Health and Social Issues George Tsereteli, and US Ambassador to Georgia John Tefft also spoke during the opening ceremony.

More than 100 members of AIHA’s partnerships from Georgia and Azerbaijan, government officials, and representatives of USAID, other donor agencies, and local and international NGOs working in the region attended the conference.

The event provided an opportunity for international donors and implementing agencies, national ministries of health, and the local governmental and nongovernmental sectors to share best practices and lessons learned, as well as to discuss ideas for future cooperation. It also featured a graduation ceremony for partners from many of the institutions involved in AIHA's recent programs in the region.

Sessions highlighted not only the accomplishments of individual partnerships, but the program's overall impact as a vehicle for strengthening health systems in both countries as well.

Since AIHA began supporting USAID's primary care strategy in 1998, partners have conducted 600 exchanges and trained more than 10,000 healthcare professionals from the Caucasus. Partnership primary care and family medicine centers in all three countries in the region have cumulatively logged nearly half a million patient visits for screening, diagnosis, treatment, education, and counseling during that time.



Conference participants attend the opening session.

Over the past 15 years, US communities, institutions, and health professionals have contributed more than \$39 million in professional time, direct and indirect costs, and donated supplies and equipment to the region, more than matching the \$26 million in contributions from the American people through USAID.

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