

Volga River Alliance Project Focuses on Human Resource Development in Russia's Samara and Saratov Oblasts

AIHA has joined forces with AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) — the largest NGO provider of HIV/AIDS services in the United States — to help develop replicable, integrated models of HIV/AIDS treatment and care through pilot projects in the Saratov Oblast cities of Saratov and Engels, and in the city of Togliatti in Samara Oblast.



Clinicians from Engels City Clinic No. 2 honed their clinical skills during an on-site mentoring course conducted in April.

Supported by USAID through its Global Development Alliance, the Volga River Alliance is a public-private project that links AIHA and AHF with the Saratov Oblast Ministry of Health and Togliatti City Administration. The goal of project is to strengthen local capacity to provide HIV-related treatment, particularly at the primary care level.

The joint initiative builds on the many accomplishments of AIHA's USAID-funded Saratov/Bemidji and Togliatti/Providence partnerships, which were established in 2004 to create model HIV and AIDS care, treatment, and

support programs that could be replicated throughout the Russian Federation.

As implementing partner under the project, AIHA leads the training and monitoring and evaluation components, while AHF provides expertise in clinic operations and management, as well as professional mentors and faculty and substantial amounts of pharmaceuticals and supplies.

Thanks to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, both Samara and Saratov oblasts are receiving more reliable supplies of antiretroviral (ARV) medications, which necessitates the rapid training and development of healthcare providers and allied professionals capable of providing treatment, care, and support services to people living with HIV (PLWH) — including the management of often complex ARV regimens.

The Volga River Alliance is supporting Saratov and Togliatti as they work to scale up HIV and AIDS-related treatment and care by — among other things — initiating antiretroviral therapy (ART) for 1,500 individuals living with HIV in these regions by the end of 2007.

Under the project, trainings target HIV/AIDS care teams from local AIDS Centers, as well as infectious disease specialists and other clinical experts from medical institutions that provide care to PLWH.

Trainings commenced in both Saratov Oblast and Togliatti in December 2006. Subsequent training and mentoring courses were conducted in March and April 2007 for clinicians from Togliatti and the cities of Balakovo, Engels, Komsomolsk, and Volsk in Saratov Oblast. Additional activities are planned for May and September.

USAID's Global Development Alliance represents a new approach to implementing the agency's assistance mandate. It mobilizes the ideas, efforts, and resources of governments, businesses, and civil society by forging public-private alliances to stimulate economic growth, develop businesses and workforces, address health and environmental issues, and expand access to education and technology.



Practitioners from Saratov Oblast learn about ARV regimens and other care and support services for PLWH during a training course held in April.