

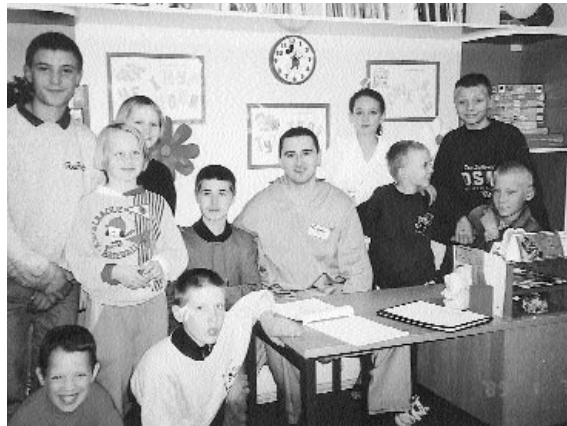
EMSTC Opens Professional Doors to Ambulance Pediatrician

As a child, Oleg Zinevich dreamed of becoming a doctor and he worked steadily toward that goal. But, after graduating from the Chernovtsy Medical Institute and completing a pediatric internship at the Kiev Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education, Oleg says he “began to work for the 15th Kiev Ambulance Substation and found that I lacked sufficient practical skills in emergency care and was very concerned with that discovery. Luckily, some physicians with whom I work told me about the Kiev EMSTC, which they said had all the necessary resources to polish one’s skills.”

Unable to obtain the necessary class admittance voucher from the Central Ambulance Station, but eager to attend a course at the Center, Oleg visited the EMSTC to meet its Director, Mikhail Natsyuk, who eventually permitted him to join an already formed group. “I was very surprised at what I found there because it was different from my previous educational experiences,” recalls Oleg. “First of all, the teaching methodology was very clear and the trainers were very skilled. Then, during the training, I was expected to practice the knowledge I learned on mannequins designed to copy the human body to the maximum extent possible. I was also impressed with the audiovisual equipment used to show films describing how to provide care in emergency situations.” Inspired by the classes and the greater potential for providing care to those in need, an enthusiastic Oleg says he “remained in the classroom long after the classes ended to practice and polish all the algorithms.” “The algorithms are very important,” he explains, “because they helped me know exactly how much time I should spend on any given manipulation, and, as an ambulance physician, time is often my most precious resource.”

Oleg’s dedication did not go unnoticed by his trainers. After completing the training program, he was offered the opportunity to become a trainer at the Center, an offer he

immediately accepted. Since this is not a full-time position, Oleg continues to work at the 15th Ambulance Substation as a member of the pediatric team, which allows him to practice the skills he teaches every day.



In addition to his jobs as an ambulance physician and instructor at the Kiev EMSTC, ambulance physician Oleg Zinevich also volunteers at a local shelter for homeless children.

“When we get a call to visit a small child, we usually go without knowing what to expect, so we must be prepared for anything,” explains Oleg. Soon after he completed his training course, Oleg’s team was called to visit a two-month-old infant. He recalls the incident: “When we went in the apartment, the infant was in her mother’s arms and I instantly knew something was very wrong. The infant was not breathing, nor was there a heart beat. I put an oxygen mask on her for 20-30 seconds, but that didn’t help, so I immediately started closed chest massage and my assistant began mouth-to-mouth resuscitation—to no effect. We knew we had to switch to drug therapy as soon as possible so I quickly explained to the father how to do mouth-to-mouth while my assistant prepared the necessary medicine. We gave the infant a subclavian injection of adrenalin with a physiolution and thankfully her heart started beating. Once she was stabilized, we took her to the local ICU.” Oleg says he faces many such cases daily. “I now feel satisfaction when I leave my patients. I began to get that feeling after taking the EMS course

The Kiev EMS Training Center (EMSTC), which was opened as part of AIHA’s Kiev/Coney Island partnership, has been operating since 1995. According to research carried out by the Center’s staff, the mortality rate of patients admitted to Kiev Ambulance Hospital with trauma or acute poisoning continues to gradually decline as the number of emergency services specialists who receive training at the Center increases. Additionally, by the order of the Minister of Health of Ukraine, all ambulance teams in Ukraine are now equipped with the immobilization kits first demonstrated at the Kiev EMSTC. This is the story of a trainee whose professional life was changed by attending a course at the Center. The history of Kiev EMS Center is on the other side.

because my training allowed me to act automatically, without losing a single second.”

One month after completing his initial training at the Kiev EMSTC, Oleg attended a workshop in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, organized by AIHA for new EMSTC trainers where, in addition to other things, he practiced his teaching skills by instructing children in emergency medicine techniques. Since that time, Oleg has also accepted a position as pediatrician for the Aspern Children’s Charitable Foundation, which takes care of street children. At the Foundation, Oleg provides medical care to the homeless children and teaches them emergency medicine. “These kids often find themselves in difficult situations, including those where emergency care is needed. There is a good chance that the knowledge I impart can help them save a human life, making all the time I spend doing this worthwhile,” he says.

Talking about his life now, Oleg says: “Even though I have virtually no personal time, I’m happy that my life is what it is. Thanks to the Kiev EMSTC, I have achieved maximum success in professional terms and am deeply satisfied with my work in moral terms.

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EMS Training Center Dream Becomes a Reality

"The idea to establish an Emergency Medical Service Training Center (EMSTC) came to me in the early 1990s when I became the head of the Department for Disaster Medicine—which provides comprehensive training to the emergency medicine specialists—at the Kiev Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education," says Mikhail Natsyuk, director of the Kiev EMSTC. "At that time, I was always thinking about how we could teach people to use emergency medicine methodologies because I saw the need for this and knew that ambulance teams often encountered problems related to cardiopulmonary resuscitation and transport immobilization, for example, at the pre-hospital stage," he explains, adding, "I knew that EMS techniques could help these physicians and their patients, but we had no way to teach them appropriate skills at that time as we lacked the necessary equipment and materials."

Thus, when AIHA proposed that the Department of Disaster Medicine and Coney Island Hospital in Brooklyn, New York—as part of AIHA's now-graduated Kiev/Coney Island partnership—work together to establish a joint EMSTC, Mikhail Natsyuk was eager to accept the offer. Looking back on the program, Natsyuk says, "Our partnership broadened our opportunities. We got access to the Internet, new information, mannequins, training tools, and state-of-the-art equipment, not to mention the opportunity to meet colleagues from other countries, which opened our minds to new ways of looking at the world. In addition, six of our trainers spent time in the United States, where they gained both theoretical and practical knowledge. So, thanks to AIHA, I was able to make my dream come true."

Over the years, Natsyuk and his trainers have implemented various courses to respond to the specific needs of diverse groups of trainees. As he explains, "For



Dr. Mikhail Natsyuk, director of the Kiev EMSTC, explains an intubation procedure to a group of ambulance physicians from Kiev and Vinnytsia.

ambulance teams, we have introduced a two-week training program that covers all the fundamentals of emergency medicine—from the primary examination to cardiopulmonary resuscitation, intubation, and immobilization in cases of an acute trauma. We also offer a shorter course for non-medical professionals that covers issues of providing emergency treatment in extreme conditions. It is worth noting that we teach all of the topics to each category of trainees in different volumes and skill levels—tailored to meet their needs. We also offer two-day courses on selected topics. For example, not all ambulances are equipped with laryngoscopes, so we teach ambulance teams how to intubate manually."

The success of the Kiev EMSTC provided the impetus for opening a network of similar centers across Ukraine. The Center has trained the instructors at the L'viv and Donetsk EMSTCs, which were also established in cooperation with AIHA. And, in the near future, the Ukrainian Ministry of Health plans to set up similar centers in Simferopol and Uzhgorod, and eventually in other Ukrainian regions, as well.

"Since the very first months of its existence, our Center has been extremely popular among all categories of trainees—from ambulance doctors to non-medical first-responders. The teaching methodology that we use is very accessible and thus there are many people who want to take our courses.

The Kiev EMS Training Center was established in November 1995 at the Kiev Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education, a member of AIHA's Kiev/Coney Island partnership. Designed to train EMS specialists to provide pre-hospital care to those in need, the Center has trained more than 4,350 individuals to date. Apart from medical specialists, the Center also trains policemen, traffic officers, firefighters, rescuers, and other non-medical first-responders. The story of how this Center came into existence and what it offers is on this page; the story of a trainee whose professional life was changed by attending a course at the Center is found on the other side.

Trainee groups are usually formed several months in advance, so it is often difficult to get in," Natsyuk laughs, adding, "Such was the case with Oleg Zinevich. Usually, we send trainee admittance vouchers to the Central Ambulance Station, which distributes them among substations. One day, after our trainee pool was already formed, I was approached by a young physician who was denied a voucher, but desperately wanted to attend the training. I appreciated his persistence and decided to admit him. Not only did he master the EMS methodology, but Oleg also immediately understood the importance teaching others how easily a human life can be saved. I saw that the EMS topic was extremely interesting to him and decided to offer him a job. Oleg is currently a successful trainer at the Center."

"I always tell my trainees that their knowledge of EMS techniques should be so well developed, so automatic, that they are able to save a human life without thinking. That's why we do what we do," emphasizes Mikhail Natsyuk.

For more information on AIHA, visit www.aiha.com.

