

Breast Care Centers Open in Ukraine

By Sharon Weinstein, RN

Learning that a mammogram has detected a lump can be one of the most stressful events a woman faces. To ensure women have access to education on and screening for breast problems, AIHA is opening three Breast Cancer Centers in Ukraine this spring. Breast Care Centers in L'viv, Odessa and Kiev will be part of the Women's Wellness Centers already established in these cities.

The breast care program will provide a comprehensive program for women, emphasizing education, identification of those at risk, breast self-examination, screening and diagnosis, and a referral program with an ultimate goal of lowering the number of breast cancer deaths.

In collaboration with the [Program for Appropriate Technology in Health \(PATH\)](#), a Seattle-based non-governmental organization, AIHA has developed a full range of educational materials and programs, including school-based and public awareness programs to educate women concerning the risk of breast cancer and the need for self-detection. A Ukrainian-language breast self-exam video has been created based on an American Cancer Society tape. In a parallel program, PATH is assisting the Ukrainian Ministry of Health in strengthening and sustaining a national breast cancer program, focusing both at a national level and in two pilot regions, in Kiev and Chernihiv.

The AIHA centers represent a model screening and early diagnosis program with a cost-effective mix of techniques and technology, including mammography and ultrasonography. By early detection and referral to appropriate existing community resources, women in the regions served will receive optimal care.

A patient tracking system linked to breast cancer registries and other relevant data sets will help provide clinical insight into the impact of the centers on morbidity and mortality. Training in the use of the data system was provided in January by AIHA's women's and breast health content experts in the Kiev regional office, who in turn, provided training to program participants representing the three sites.

A collaborative conference on breast care, drawing on the expertise of Ukrainian and US specialists, will be held this May. The program coincides with Ukrainian Breast Cancer Awareness Week, during which displays, videos, brochures, and a local campaign will highlight the importance of early detection and screening.

AIHA partnerships have already established a foundation of organizational reform and clinical and administrative skills. They will now use quality assessment parameters to evaluate patients using traditional measures of incidence, stage, survival and mortality; to assess economic and psychosocial issues facing patients; to analyze the use and cost of prevention, screening and referral services; to standardize surveillance methods and data elements; and to gauge trends in and barriers to screening, as well as treatment and follow-up services.

Sharon Weinstein directs AIHA's breast care program.