

## Four New Russian Partnerships Selected

*By Barbara Ruben and Joanne Neuber*

In January, AIHA added four new one-year partnerships between hospitals in Russia and the United States to its network of partners throughout the NIS and CEE. The partnerships, each of which had been formed independently before its association with AIHA, focus on an array of activities, including infection control for children with cancer, neonatal resuscitation and tuberculosis control.

### **Buryatia-Rhineland, Wisconsin**

A partnership between the Ministry of Health of Buryatia, an autonomous Russian republic located near the border with Mongolia, and Sacred Heart-Saint Mary's Hospitals Inc. of Rhineland, Wisconsin focuses on maternal and child health, particularly on neonatal care. The partnership will participate in the neonatal resuscitation training initiative developed by AIHA and the Ministry of Health.

At City Maternity Hospital in Ulan Ulde, the capital city of Buryatia, only 10 percent of pregnant women are considered to be in good health, according to Dorothy Skye, MD, an obstetrician-gynecologist at Sacred Heart-Saint Mary's Hospitals, Inc. who has coordinated medical efforts with local Buryat health officials for the past four years. Nearly 70 percent of births have complications, and Skye is concerned that pollution of nearby Lake Baikal has contributed to these health problems.

### **Chelyabinsk-Tacoma, Washington**

The partnership between Multicare Medical Center and other Tacoma, Washington-area health care institutions and Chelyabinsk regional and city administrations and area hospitals will work to improve neonatal health as well. The partnership is conducting neonatal resuscitation courses for obstetricians and pediatricians from community hospitals in the Chelyabinsk region, which is highly polluted from radioactive wastes used to make nuclear weapons and was closed to all foreigners until 1992.

The partnership is also collecting data on neonatal health problems and mortality, and assessing current practices on stabilizing and transporting sick newborns. This summer, a physician from Chelyabinsk will participate in a three-week neonatal residency program at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital, part of the Multicare Medical Center, and then serve as a neonatal resuscitation trainer and expert in Chelyabinsk.

### **Volgograd-Little Rock, Arkansas**

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock and the Volgograd State Medical Academy are continuing their work in improving the diagnosis, treatment and management of tuberculosis. Through the partnership, multiple drug-resistant strains of TB will be identified, using specimens collected from patients in Volgograd. A tuberculosis control officer for the Volgograd region and a molecular biologist from the State Medical Academy will study methods of tuberculosis prevention and control at the University of Arkansas.

Partners plan to collaborate with the Russian Ministry of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization to help identify the epidemiological factors common to TB in Russia. The program will seek to replicate a successful WHO demonstration project in Ivanovo Oblast. Partners hope to create a model program on TB that can be replicated in other regions of Russia.

## **Moscow-Memphis, Tennessee**

Methodist Health Systems in Memphis, Tennessee and the Scientific Research Institute of Pediatric Hematology in Moscow are working to improve survival rates and infection control practices for children with lymphoma and leukemia. Partners are standardizing and streamlining patient data collection so that they can better track patient outcomes. Partners have found that acute lymphocytic leukemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma have been "significantly improved" since the partnership began six years ago, said John Sanderlund, MD, an associate member of the Department of Hematology and Oncology at St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.

Another component of the partnership includes improving and standardizing infection control methods, including what cultures are necessary, which antibiotics to use and when anti-fungal drugs should be administered.