

AIHA Directions

AIHA to Launch NIS Women's Health Initiative

Women's health--especially reproductive health--is an area that has traditionally been neglected in the NIS. Limited information and misunderstanding of modern family planning methods contribute to low contraceptive use. Repeated abortion, combined with an underdeveloped program to treat gynecological infections and cancers, add to complications in pregnancy. In addition, education and screening programs for such diseases as breast and cervical cancer are either not available or poorly coordinated.

To help give women access to a range of services and information, AIHA plans to develop model comprehensive women's health programs in 14 partnerships over the next year. These women's centers will provide partners with the opportunity to either create a model center that provides ambulatory care services and preventive health counseling as well as classes in family planning and general health. Each center will provide services to approximately 4,000 women annually. In addition, the centers will reach out to women in their communities, schools and work places. Some partners may instead develop an initiative that will improve women's health within existing institutions.

Partners will develop programs that:

- Promote the safe and responsible spacing of pregnancies
- Introduce and promote safe and effective contraceptives
- Prevent and manage sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS
- Implement a family-centered model of obstetrical care
- Promote proper diet and nutrition, including prenatal counseling
- Screen for high-risk pregnancy conditions, such as diabetes
- Screen for breast and cervical cancer
- Screen for cardiovascular diseases and promote education on reduction of risk factors
- Address mental health issues, including depression
- Develop accessible, high-quality women's health services

The women's health project will build on programs already in place in some partnerships, such as the Woman and Family Education Center and Family Planning Clinic, at Savior's Hospital in Moscow. The center, developed in partnership with Magee-Women's Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, provides contraceptives and offers classes in prenatal care and family planning.

A related project will emphasize breast cancer screening for women in Ukraine. For example, the Kiev-Philadelphia and L'viv-Buffalo partnerships plan to develop programs to detect cancer early, through clinical breast examination, mammography and instruction about self-examination.

New Bosnian Partnership Announced

One in four children in Sarajevo has been wounded in the war in Bosnia, and 98 percent have experienced shelling, according to a 1993 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) survey. Sixty-six percent of the city's children said they had been in situations where "they thought they would die."

Statistics like these portend a long physical and emotional recovery for residents of what is now called the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but that nation's health care system soon will be getting help: AIHA and USAID have announced plans to establish a new, two-year hospital partnership there starting this fall.

The Bosnian partner institution likely will be located in Tuzla, a city in the nation's northeastern region where the US military presence currently is centered.

The partnership will emphasize goals similar to AIHA's other CEE partnerships (e.g., expanding the role of nursing, improving medical and technical knowledge and financing skills), while targeting specific community-based medical needs like critical medical/surgical procedures, emergency medicine and rehabilitation at Tuzla's teaching hospital.

Bosnia was chosen as a partnership site to further USAID's goals of promoting ethnic reconciliation in the region and strengthening the ongoing peace process set forth in last year's Dayton Peace Accord. USAID and AIHA believe that the partnership will lend credibility to the new Bosnian government, ruled by a Muslim-Croat Federation, by providing evidence that it can serve local needs.

Applications from potential US partners currently are being considered by AIHA staff.

Medicine for You Exposition Promotes Health Care Advances

With the advent of national health reforms, the Russian Federation Ministry of Health sponsored an international health exposition to inform the general public and health care professionals about its advances in health care services and industry. The exposition, called "Medicine for You," was held in Moscow this June as a collaborative endeavor of the Ministry of Health, Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, State Sanitary and Epidemiological Committee and the Federal Mandatory Health Insurance Fund.

At the request of Minister of Health Alexander Tsaregorodtsev, AIHA partners from the Russian Federation and other NIS countries were represented at the exhibits and participated in workshops, which highlighted AIHA's successful community outreach programs in diabetes, home health care, women's health and emergency response.

At Medicine for You, Almaty Toxicology Center Director Elzhan Birtanov discussed how the center launched an effective public health awareness campaign to increase understanding of the hazards of toxins. Informational brochures published at the center were available for the participants.

Part of the three-day event focused on nursing. Twenty-seven nursing representatives from AIHA NIS partnerships promoted some of their successes, including advances in nursing roles for implementing hospital-wide infection control, childbirth education, microhospital models and patient education programs. Nurses from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan shared information about their model nursing administration program, and nurses from Central Clinical Hospital in Moscow provided information on the advanced role of the clinical nurse educator.

AIHA Executive Director to Speak at International Managed Care Summit

AIHA Executive Director James P. Smith will lead a seminar about AIHA's work in developing technical assistance at a September conference in Mexico City on international health care trends. The conference brings together 500 managed care leaders from the United States to explore health issues of common concern throughout the world. The conference is presented by the American Association of Health Plans and the Academy for International Health Studies, Inc. AIHA is an associate sponsor of the conference.

The conference focuses on directions in health care reform around the world, international perspectives on managed competition, globalization of health information management technologies and progress in maternal and child health. Keynote speakers include former UN Secretary-General

Javier Perez de Cuellar, World Bank Vice President Armeane Choksi and Mexican Secretary of Health Juan Ramon de la Fuente.

For further information about the conference, contact the Academy for International Health Studies at 621 Georgetown Place, Davis, California 95616, (916) 863-1380.

Standardizing Accreditation for Foreign Doctors

For foreign health professionals wishing to practice in the US, the process of gaining accreditation is complex and difficult, and can vary greatly between states. Richard Morrison, PhD, AIHA's coordinator for health management education partnerships, offered solutions for streamlining this process at a May conference sponsored by the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education. He advocated "a single national standard for entry and continued practice" for health professionals seeking US accreditation, to be monitored by a private, nonprofit "Center for Credentialing of Health Professionals."

"The freer interchange of professional manpower across national boundaries is a social good that is impeded by the actions of state-level licensing boards in the US," he said. "Better care, treatment or outcomes have not been shown to be associated with greater restrictiveness."

The conference, titled "Trade Agreements, Higher Education and the Emergence of Global Professions: The Quality Dimension," was held at the US Department of State.