

Czech HME Partnerships Graduate, Look to Future

By Julia Ross

As the US Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Czech Republic closed its doors last fall, AIHA's two Czech health management education (HME) partnerships marked the end of a two-year collaboration that produced several new degree-track educational programs for prospective health managers in Czech Republic.

A September 11 ceremony in Prague celebrated the graduation of a partnership between four Czech educational institutions--South Bohemia University in Jindrichuv Hradec and Ceske Budejovice, University of Education and Purkyne Medical Academy in Hradec Kralove, and Postgraduate Medical School in Prague--and the University of Nevada in Reno, Nevada.

Partnership activities focused on designing new health management curricula, developing faculty skills and establishing health management resource centers at partner universities, which include computers with Internet access.

"We have appreciated the chance to cooperate in creating curricula for health care management at the Bachelor's level, case studies and literature, in addition to the use of new technological equipment," said Petr Pirozek, PhD, assistant professor of management at South Bohemia University.

AIHA Executive Director James P. Smith, who attended the Prague event, lauded partners for their pioneering efforts. "The new capacity in the Czech Republic to educate future generations of managers for the health care system is a significant step forward in creating the necessary infrastructure for reform," he said.

On September 24, a second graduation ceremony was held in the Moravian city of Olomouc to mark the end of the partnership between Palacky University and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia.

Ivan Gladkij, MD, PhD, head, Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Policy at Palacky University, said his institution had reaped numerous benefits from the partnership, including development of a new Master's degree program in health management, exposure to new teaching methodologies and membership in "a network of collaborators" throughout CEE. The Master's program is the first of its kind in Czech Republic.

"Personal contacts with the American health care system and discussion with American specialists ... allowed us to deepen our current knowledge on ways of thinking, finance and management. The variety of the US system served as a big laboratory for us," he said. "All of this is being applied to teaching our students--future physicians, nurses, nurse educators--and in postgraduate education of senior health care managers, not only in the Master's course."

Each graduation ceremony ended with a teleconference that linked the Czech partner institutions with colleagues in the US. Both Czech partnerships will continue faculty and curriculum development in health care management through the use of teleconferencing capabilities established through AIHA ([see related article](#)).

In a related event, Czech Republic's South Bohemia University signed its own memorandum of understanding October 16 establishing an international partnership with Slovak health management education partner University of Matej Bel in Banska Bystrica. Paula Goddard, the new USAID representative for Slovakia, attended the signing. In addition to health management activities, the universities' collaboration will include other academic disciplines such as economics.

"Future activities will lead to possible exchanges of students and teachers in health care management, research and publications," noted Pirozek.