

## **AIHA Directions**

### **Nursing Conferences Held in Central Asia**

Nursing conferences held in Semipalatinsk, Kazakstan and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in September focused on professional development and standards of care.

The 2,000-member Semipalatinsk Nursing Association, together with the American Association of Operating Room Nurses (AORN), hosted their second nursing conference this fall. Held from September 16 to 17 in Semipalatinsk, the conference was attended by nurses from the Semipalatinsk-Houston, Texas partnership. The conference highlighted the professional development of the nursing process in Semipalatinsk-area hospitals, management standards and procedures, aseptic techniques and universal precautions, nursing roles in the operating room, and standards of care. Association leaders cited ways their organization has promoted the role of the nurse in the region, including monthly meetings, training programs and the association's quarterly newsletter.

The Bishkek-Kansas City partnership sponsored a conference in Bishkek on September 24 and 25. The more than 300 Kyrgyz nurses attending the conference received a special welcome from Kyrgyz Minister of Health Naken Kasiev, who commended Bishkek nurses for creating a national nursing association and developing nursing standards of care. The standards, written by a committee of Kyrgyz nurses and approved by the Ministry of Health this year, were distributed to conference participants.

"Advancing the role of the nurse would be impossible without the rigorous application of standards in nurses' training and practice," said Zhyldyz Isakova, nurse educator at the Republican Center for Continuing Medical and Pharmaceutical Education in Bishkek.

### **First Nursing Resource Center Opens in CEE**

Latvian nurses opened the CEE region's inaugural Nursing Resource Center (NRC) this fall at the Latvia Nurses Association in Riga, Latvia. The center is the first in a series of NRCs scheduled to open at five to seven CEE partner institutions by next spring. A network of NRCs began opening in the NIS last year; the next NIS center will open this fall in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Invited to the September 9 opening in Riga were Latvian First Lady Aina Ulmane, Latvian Ministry of Health representatives, US Ambassador to Latvia Larry Napper, Latvian USAID representative Howard Handler and partnership representatives from Riga and St. Louis, Missouri.

Barbara Bogomolov, RN, MS, manager for Community Health and International Services at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, said the NRC's location at the nurses association would enable nurses from across Latvia to take advantage of a wide range of learning materials contributed by both Latvian and US partners.

"The NRCs will benefit as many nurses as can use them, expanding the influence of partnership activity beyond the partner institutions," said CEE Nursing Task Force co-chair Pam Thompson, RN, MSN, of the CEE NRC initiative. "There are limited learning resources for nurses in nursing schools, as well as for nurses in practice. Access to knowledge is a powerful leverage for change, and this will give nurses in CEE access to that leverage."

### **Latvian and Estonian Nurses Hold Joint Conference**

Nurses from partner and non-partner hospitals in Latvia and Estonia held a two-day international nursing conference in June in Jurmala, Latvia. Health ministry representatives and municipal health officials were among the 85 attendees. The conference addressed nursing accomplishments at partner hospitals in Tallinn, Estonia and Riga, Latvia; the importance of nursing documentation in education and clinical practice; and methods for family and patient education.

Jolanta Zalite, president of the Latvia Nurses Association, moderated a discussion on the role of the nurse leader. In addition, Estonian participants visited the Clinical Hospital of the Latvian Academy of Medicine, as well as AIHA partner institutions City Maternity Hospital and Bikur Holim Hospital in Riga.

### **Infection Control Task Force Participates in International Conference**

Infection control task force members presented information on AIHA's infection control initiative at the International Federation of Infection Control (IFIC) conference in Cambridge, England in September. Elena Bourganskaia, AIHA coordinator of the initiative, together with Ludmila Zueva, head of the Department of Epidemiology at St. Petersburg State Medical Academy, discussed AIHA's plans for opening regional infection control centers in Russia and Ukraine. Task force members also presented a poster outlining the initiative.

"Hospital epidemiologists [in the NIS] are facing an additional challenge to change the image of hospital infection control, from an external government regulating force to a consultative, clinically relevant hospital-based service...which requires review of current practices as well as training in modern infection control procedures that have not been available in the former Soviet Union," Bourganskaia said.

In addition to presenting at the conference, the task force will conduct a series of workshops in October, including an infection control workshop for senior NIS health policymakers and a basic/intermediate infection control workshop for NIS partner epidemiologists and infection control nurses.

### **Partners Attend International Council of Nurses Meeting**

A four-person delegation represented AIHA at the International Council of Nurses meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The June meeting addressed international partnerships in nursing education, nursing's role at the end-stage of life, workplace advocacy for nurses, and health care rationing and payment methods. The delegation included: AIHA nursing liaison Sharon Weinstein; NIS Nursing Task Force Co-Chair Jane Younger; Georgian Ministry of Health Nurse Lia Mamaladze; and Anna Anokhina, a graduate student at the Sechenov Nursing School in Moscow.

"This is the first time that nurses involved in the partnership program have been invited to audit the meeting," noted Weinstein. "Hopefully, this will be the impetus behind official registration of nursing associations in the NIS."

Mamaladze was asked to participate in a breakout session of chief nurses from more than 50 countries who work with ministries of health. She discussed her work responsibilities, reporting mechanisms and the major nursing issues facing Georgia. Mamaladze was also asked to speak about how she prepared for her role in the Ministry of Health.

"I was a simple staff nurse when I started work with AIHA, USAID, and my American partners," she said. "They provided educational programs, networking, and training opportunities for me and others to excel ourselves and to learn what we needed to do. I learned how to be a nursing leader, and I met many people through the program from many NIS countries."

## **Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission Briefed on Women's Health Program**

The Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission (GCC) discussed health care issues--from iodine deficiency to sexually transmitted diseases--during its ninth meeting, held in Moscow in September. The commission is a bilateral policy body headed by US Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin and meets twice a year to discuss an array of economic and science issues.

GCC health committee co-chairwomen Tatiana Dmitrieva, Russian Minister of Health, and Donna Shalala, US Secretary of Health and Human Services, noted the steps taken to strengthen international research and preventive efforts to combat AIDS and other infectious diseases. AIHA provided the GCC's Health Committee with information on partnership achievements in women's health programs in the Russian Federation, and on the partnerships' goal of reducing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases by promoting preventive programs in the newly created women's wellness centers.

## **Armenia Appoints New Health Minister**

Gagik Stamboltsian, MD, was appointed Minister of Health for Armenia in July, replacing Ara Babloyan. Stamboltsian was formerly the chief of plastic surgery at Erebuni Medical Center in Yerevan, an AIHA hospital partner with the University of California at Los Angeles. At Erebuni, Stamboltsian performed extensive reconstructive surgeries on severely burned or injured children and adults, including soldiers injured in the recent conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

One of his recent surgeries was on an 11-year-old boy who sustained severe burns on 90 percent of his body after a hand grenade he was playing with exploded. As Minister of Health, Stamboltsian said he hopes to reduce the level of childhood accidents from such explosives like grenades. He has lent support to the Yerevan-Boston and Yerevan-Los Angeles hospital partnerships and has participated in partnership initiatives between Boston and Erebuni Medical Center over the past three years.

## **EMS Achievements Cited at Russian Health Conference**

Representatives from AIHA's NIS emergency medical services (EMS) training centers traveled to Moscow, Russia in September to attend the Fifth Universal Health Conference on Emergency and Disaster Medicine. The week-long conference, which was sponsored by the Universal Health Association of Chicago, Illinois, addressed emergency response to disasters and the role of EMERCOM, the Russian Federation emergency response and prevention system.

Each of AIHA's nine EMS centers provides an average of 20 pre-hospital training courses and graduates over 600 students every year.

AIHA EMS Task Force Representative and Vladivostok-Richmond partnership coordinator Jerry Overton chaired a panel discussion on emergency first response programs offered at the Vladivostok EMS Center. Since the center's creation in 1994, EMS instructors have adapted the core course to the needs of first responders who do not have medical backgrounds--such as firefighters and traffic police--and have developed shorter courses to teach basic first aid to schoolchildren, factory workers and rural care providers. Overton also noted the center's development of the first computerized medical dispatch and patient care system in the Vladivostok region.

Representatives from NIS EMS Centers displayed information about their programs at the conference exhibit hall and offered practical demonstrations of skills learned, including basic and advanced life support procedures.

## **Enhanced Women's Wellness Center Opens at Erebuni**

Partners in Yerevan, Armenia celebrated the opening of the enhanced Women's Wellness Center (WWC) at Erebuni Medical Center in June. Participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony were Karine Sarkissian, MD, administrative director of the Women's Wellness Center (WWC) at Erebuni Medical Center; Artur Rostomian, deputy director of Erebuni; Shushan Ananian, director of the Lamaze childbirth training program at Erebuni; Salpy Akaragian, director of the International Nursing Center, University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center (UCLA); and Donald Harbick, NIS program director, AIHA; and Sharon Weinstein, director of International Programs, Premier, Inc., and program coordinator, AIHA.

The newly opened Lamaze childbirth and patient education rooms were developed with the help of US partners at UCLA to provide patients with resources to better participate in their health care. For example, women can learn about breast self-examination, proper diet and exercise habits, and the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. Fatherhood classes are also offered. The first babies born to couples participating in the Lamaze childbirth program were born in June.

The center also plans to create a satellite clinic in downtown Yerevan and develop a crisis intervention program for women that includes a team of psychologists and medical personnel from Emergency Scientific Medical Center in Yerevan. The Yerevan center is the second of a series of Women's Wellness Centers scheduled to open this year in the NIS through the AIHA partnership program.

## **AIHA Publishes NIS Infection Control Manual**

A new 500-page manual produced by an international editorial board of infection control specialists in the NIS and US will help NIS hospitals in establishing effective infection control programs based on internationally recognized principles and practice. Members of AIHA's Infection Control Task Force spent the last year preparing the handbook.

The manual covers an array of topics, including epidemiology of nosocomial infections, surveillance methods and data collection, the role of microbiology laboratories, common pathogens, isolation and barrier precautions and antimicrobial agents. The manual, published in Russian, will be distributed to partner and other hospitals in the NIS this fall.

"We hope the manual will be an integral tool in encouraging use of standardized practices to reduce rates of infection in NIS hospitals," said Elena Bourganskaia, MD, who is an AIHA project coordinator and oversees the infection control program.