

AIHA Directions

Turkmen Officials Commend Partnership Progress

On a January 26 visit to AIHA's Washington office, Turkmen Ambassador to the UN Aksoltan Ataeva and Turkmen Minister of Health Chury Kuliev presented a traditional Turkmen carpet to AIHA Executive Director Jim Smith, a symbol they said they hoped would "weave the future of our joint endeavors in health care." Ataeva and Kuliev discussed current and future partnership activities with AIHA and USAID representatives.

"Now is the time of transition in Turkmenistan," Kuliev said. "We hope that the AIHA partnership model will continue to facilitate our health programs--including financial management reform efforts, nursing reform and training of the family physician."

Combining the skills of nurses, doctors and health care administrators from the Medical Consultative Center in the Name of President Niyazov and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, the Ashgabat-Cleveland partnership created a model hospital program that can be duplicated throughout all of Turkmenistan, according to Kuliev. During its three years' operation, the partnership has promoted the creation of a dialysis program, facilitated the introduction of advanced surgical techniques, supported the expanded role of nurses and increased equipment in the surgical and dialysis units.

"We must now begin to look at how to adopt the partnership model in other hospital settings, not only in Turkmenistan, but throughout Central Asia," concluded Ataeva, who helped begin the partnership in 1993 when she was Turkmen Minister of Health.

Second NIS Nursing Conference Planned

More than 300 nurses from 50 NIS partner institutions will convene in Almaty, Kazakstan May 5 to 9 to continue to strengthen efforts for creation of national, regional and international professional nursing associations.

"This conference will emphasize that we can learn from each other and will also give our partners a guide to move forward with," explained Laura Hurt, RN, MHA, CNAA, director of medical surgical nursing at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. Hurt said she looks forward to sharing with other nurse colleagues the positive outcomes of nursing in her partner hospitals in Tbilisi, Georgia, such as sponsorship of regional nursing leadership seminars for nurses from the surrounding area.

The Almaty conference will build on AIHA's first annual nursing leadership conference, which was held last year in Golitsino, Russia. The conference will allow nurses from each NIS region to compare successes and offer suggestions for future collaboration. Daily plenary sessions, covering everything from nursing leadership to clinical nursing skills, will include sessions on skill building, curriculum reform and association management.

"Slowly [nurses] have set the stage so that they are now looked upon as a profession. And that is what all nurses want," concluded Hurt.

CEE Nursing Task Force Convenes in Washington, DC

Nine partnership countries. Nine languages. Despite the seemingly insurmountable goal of communicating in a common language, AIHA's CEE nurse leaders have found a mutual bond.

"We share the same goal--to promote collaboration among nurses throughout our countries," explained Pam Thompson, MSN, RN, CEE Nursing Task Force director and vice president at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

Nurse leaders from participating US partnerships met in Washington, DC on February 12 to discuss goals for the ongoing CEE nursing program and their upcoming pre-conference task force and conference break-out sessions, which will be held during the CEE Partnership Conference in Budapest, Hungary this spring. Task force members identified the need to promote the sharing of common critical issues in nursing and the planning of regional nursing conferences to unite CEE nursing initiatives. The initial CEE-wide partnership task force meeting on nursing, scheduled for April 30, will allow nurses from the hospital, health management and healthy community partnerships to share their ideas.

Thompson admits, however, that finding a common language among CEE nurse leaders poses a challenge for the task force. But US task force members plan to tackle the language barrier through a communication exercise for nurse leaders at the pre-conference session.

"Once this barrier is overcome, we can create a lot of nurse-to-nurse synergy. It is there, it's just never been tapped," Thompson said.

AIHA Marks 1,000th US-NIS Trip

A March study tour in which health administrators from Ukraine visited U.S. health care institutions was the 1,000th trip to the NIS or United States made by participants in AIHA's programs. The first was to Ukraine in 1992. Since then, there have been 3,015 person trips (this number reflects the fact that many partners have traveled more than once), and \$36 million in in-kind contributions made.

The 12-day study tour included Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Health Minister Anatoly Kartysh and health administrators for the city of Kiev and Odessa, Ravno, Volyn, Dnepropetrovsk and L'viv oblasts. Participants visited hospitals, clinics, EMS centers and government agencies in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington, DC. The training program was designed to familiarize senior Ukrainian health administrators with government structures, organization and operation of major US health systems. During the study tour, they explored the feasibility of replicating relevant organizational models and operational practices to improve the efficiency and quality of health care in Ukraine.

In New York, participants met with officials from the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, the largest public health care system in the United States. In Chicago, work focused primarily on group purchasing practices. The Los Angeles leg of the tour familiarized participants with both the Veterans Administration and Los Angeles County public health care system. In Washington, the Ukrainian delegation met with senior Veterans Administration and USAID administrators.