

AIHA Launches Health Management Education Partnerships

AIHA and USAID have established a new partnership program designed to build the capacity for health management in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). To date, three partnerships have been created between schools of health administration in the United States and counterpart institutions in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Plans are underway to form additional partnerships in Romania and Albania. The health management education partnerships are part of a multifaceted strategy for addressing the management problems faced by these new democracies. As CEE countries make the transition from a highly centralized to a privatized health sector, health care leaders are striving to ensure the continued delivery of affordable universal health care. The goal of these partnerships is to create local capacity for educating health administrators who are skilled in leadership decision making, budgeting, accounting, information systems, data collection and analysis, utilization review and outcomes measurement, and other management techniques.

Partnership initiatives will focus on designing health management curricula, developing faculty, organizing and financing management education programs, and building relationships with the health care provider community. Partners will develop health management education libraries and resource centers, and will participate in interpartnership activities, including publications, workshops and study tours. In addition, the partnerships will assist in the creation of a CEE professional association for health administration programs.

In the Czech Republic, an innovative two-partnership collaboration involving two US and three Czech universities will develop basic management education courses and at least four specific instructional modules. They will also establish health management libraries at the Czech universities and undertake faculty and student exchanges.

The first exchange, this January, involves faculty members from the Czech universities--East Bohemia University, South Bohemia University and Olomouc University in the Moravia region--who will travel to the United States for an intensive two-week orientation to US medical care and health management education. Six faculty from the two Bohemia universities will visit the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV), and three members of the Olomouc faculty will visit the Department of Health Administration at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond, VA.

Mary A. Paterson, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Health Administration at UNLV, will coordinate the partnership with the two universities in Bohemia. The VCU partnership with Olomouc University will be coordinated by Charles L. Breindel, PhD, professor of health administration and director of international program development. While the partnerships are separate, the efforts of the two US universities will be closely coordinated. The partnerships plan to build capacity for academic training in health management as well as provide executive training and distance learning for managers already in the field throughout the Czech Republic.

In the third partnership, the University of Scranton in Scranton, PA will collaborate with two Slovakian universities--the Economic Faculty in Banska Bystricka and Trnava University in Trnava. The Health Management School and the Institute for Postgraduate Education in Bratislava will also participate in the Slovakia-Scranton partnership.

The Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA), which has collaborated with AIHA on a series of health management workshops in CEE/NIS, participated in the selection of the partnership institutions and is assisting AIHA and the US partner institutions in assessing the health management needs of the CEE countries.