

AIHA Women's Health Centers to Open This Winter

Sorely needed services like family planning, screening and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and cancer, perinatal care and basic medical assessment will become more available to NIS women this winter when AIHA partners open the first of 14 planned women's health centers at partner hospitals across the region.

The centers will provide clinical and educational services in ambulatory care facilities, utilizing a client-centered approach while addressing women's health care needs throughout their lives. Health promotion and disease prevention will be emphasized to discourage smoking and alcohol-consumption and encourage exercise and good nutrition.

Staffing at the centers will take a multidisciplinary approach: obstetrician/gynecologists, family practitioners, midwives, nurses, psychologists and health educators will work together to provide services to patients and create community outreach activities designed to improve women's health.

Each center plans to serve approximately 4,000 women annually, and will draw on the clinical expertise available at the host AIHA partner hospital. The first centers are slated to open in December, including ones in Almaty, Kazakstan; Dubna, Russia; Stavropol, Russia; St. Petersburg, Russia; Moscow, Russia; Tashkent, Uzbekistan; and Odessa, Ukraine.

"Women's health is down in all these countries. With this initiative, we'll put our hands on women, but we'll have an overall effect on everyone's health," said Kathryn Zaki, RN, a member of AIHA's Women's Health Initiative Task Force and deputy director of maternal and child health nursing at Coney Island Hospital in Brooklyn, New York.

A related AIHA initiative on breast cancer prevention will also be launched this winter in Ukraine. Several partner hospitals will develop programs to promote clinical breast examination, mammography and breast self-examination.