

Mother and Child Health Information Center Opens in Albania

New parents and health professionals now have their own resource center at the Maternity Hospital in Tirana, Albania, thanks to the support of AIHA and Albania's Health for All Foundation. A reception and ribbon-cutting were held July 5 to mark the formal opening of the hospital's Mother and Child Health Information Center, with a ministry of health representative, USAID officials, hospital staff and AIHA staff members in attendance.

The center houses a library with medical books and professional journals for physicians and nurses (largely in-kind donations from AIHA partner Jacobi Medical Center in Bronx, New York), and a computer with CD-ROM capability and a planned Internet connection. For new parents, the center offers educational materials on topics such as breast feeding and care of the newborn. Two full-time staffers, provided by the Health for All Foundation (with support from the Soros Foundation), will coordinate educational seminars for new parents, to be held in the center's large meeting room. This room will also be available for workshops and seminars organized by the hospital's physicians and nurses.

Various officials attended the opening, including: Teodor Todhe, MD, general director for hospitals at the Albanian Ministry of Health; Deedee Blane, USAID Representative to Albania; Cam Pippitt and Silva Mitro of USAID; Zhani Treska, MD, director of the Maternity Hospital; Tatjana Daci, director of the Health for All Foundation; Bill Walsh, chief operating officer of Jacobi Medical Center; and Charles Brecher, professor of public administration at New York University, representing AIHA's health management education partnership between Albania and New York.

The center will also serve as an office for AIHA's new in-country coordinator for Albania, Judy Biletnikoff.