

## Community Health Center Opens in Turcianske Teplice

For those citizens of Turcianske Teplice, Slovakia who worry that their blood pressure might be a little high, peace of mind could be right around the corner. Last October, the town opened a Community Health Advisory and Education Center--the first in Slovakia to be operated and financed entirely by a municipality--to make health promotion and disease prevention services accessible to the population at no cost.

One of the outcomes of a two-year healthy communities partnership with The MetroHealth System of Cleveland, Ohio, the center offers hypertension and cholesterol screenings, diabetes screenings and counseling, breast examinations for women, prenatal education, and drug, alcohol and smoking cessation counseling. Open five days a week for four hours a day, it is staffed by a part-time physician and nurse, along with a full-time manager.

"The center is unique--it is a fact that the health care sector itself is unable to sustain the cost of primary prevention," said Turcianske Teplice mayor Alena Chlapikova at AIHA's recent Healthy Communities-Healthy Cities Dissemination Conference. "The center is a concrete step toward primary preventive services."

Center manager Alexander Chvojka said the facility offered health advice to about 30 patrons a week in its first month of operation. He plans to extend the center's scope of activities by organizing seminars on healthy lifestyles and nutrition at local schools, and participating in health promotion events in coordination with the Association of Healthy Cities of Slovakia. "It is important and necessary to be consistent in our efforts to promote healthy lifestyles in the community," he said.

About 90 people attended the October 29 center opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony, including the Mayor of Turcianske Teplice, the entire town council, mayors from surrounding towns, a representative of the Slovak Ministry of Health, and the Zilinsky Kraj regional director. Germany's Boehringer Mannheim company donated a Reflotron IV (valued at \$7,000) to the center for use in blood cholesterol screening.