

## Teleconference Connects Washington and Moscow

*By Martin Saggese*

During a live teleconference held on January 31 between Washington, DC and Moscow, Russia, Russian Minister of Health Aleksandr Tsaregorodtsev reported on the work of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission summit to health officials from Moscow, Dubna, Murmansk, Stavropol, and Vladivostok. The highlight of the teleconference was the announcement of Eli Lilly's donation of \$3.1 million in pharmaceuticals to AIHA partnerships in those cities and regions.

The video conference was sponsored by AIHA and Eli Lilly and was organized with the support of VideoBridge International, a Massachusetts-based company that provides international teleconferencing services.

The group of representatives from the Russian regions had assembled in a Moscow teleconferencing facility equipped with a PictureTel videoconferencing unit. From the facility, operated by the Russian news agency ITAR-TASS, delegates watched live addresses from Tsaregorodtsev, James Smith, AIHA's executive director, and Ronald Stowe, vice president of Eli Lilly, who were gathered at a similarly equipped facility at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.

Although the teleconference was transmitted at 128 kilobits per second, less than half of the bandwidth usually used during domestic videoconferences in the US, the full-motion images were of high quality, and participants from the health ministry and the US government were impressed with the capabilities of the technology. This level of bandwidth lends itself well to training and meeting settings.

The Moscow-Washington video conference represents an expansion of technology-driven initiatives used by AIHA and its partners. Working with Eli Lilly and the LaCrosse-Dubna partnership, AIHA plans to equip a teleconferencing facility at the International University in Dubna. The partnership is planning an ongoing series of training sessions as part of a model diabetes disease management program. AIHA is planning to make videoconferencing time available in the next few months to other partnerships who wish to use either the facility in Dubna or a studio in Moscow for conferences with any suitably-equipped location in the United States.