



## AIHA Launches Web-based Blood Safety Toolkit and Resource Guide for Eurasia Region

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<b>Nurturing a Cadre of HIV Physicians in Russia</b>	2	Assuring the quality of blood supplies in the nations of Eastern Europe and Central Asia is a significant public health issue in the region.	efforts to improve the safety and quality of their blood supply and related systems.	and blood products, as well as voluntary blood donation and practitioner training programs.
<b>Azerbaijani Practitioners Trained in Advanced ART</b>	3	Increasing HIV prevalence poses escalating concerns over donor selection; developing a pool of regular voluntary donors who exhibit low-risk behaviors is a major challenge; and developing effective blood screening policies and procedures is a key priority.	Over the past decade, AIHA has amassed significant experience in the field of blood safety in the region, particularly through USAID-funded projects in Georgia and Moldova. Collaborating with AABB — formerly known as the American Association of Blood Banks — AIHA helped implement new blood safety standards and regulations consistent with international best practices at project sites.	Based on this knowledge and expertise, the Blood Safety Toolkit provides a wealth of information and related resources — including standard operating procedures and training modules — on topics such as quality management, promoting voluntary blood donation, effective clinical use of blood and blood products, monitoring and evaluation, and guidance on drafting new blood safety laws in keeping with European directives.
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<b>Building Capacity to Treat IDUs with HIV and TB</b>	5	Precipitated by requests from Kazakhstan, Russia, and other countries in the region, AIHA has developed a Web-based toolkit designed to assist these nations in their	In addition, AIHA initiated new management information systems and guidelines for effective clinical use of blood	The toolkit is available in Russian and English at <a href="http://www.EurasiaHealth.org">www.EurasiaHealth.org</a> .

## USAID Continues Funding for AIHA's Successful Health Management Education Project in Georgia



AIHA's USAID-supported Strengthening Health Management Education in Georgia Project launched MBA program specializations in hospital administration and health insurance management at two Tbilisi universities.

USAID has awarded AIHA a grant to continue its highly successful Strengthening Health Management Education in Georgia Project.

Delivered in 2007-2008, the initial year-long program resulted in the development of graduate level specializations in hospital administration and health insurance management within MBA programs at the Caucasus University School of Business and the University of Georgia.

AIHA linked these Tbilisi-based institutions with the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania to develop curricula and materials for the 18-credit specializations, as well as to train faculty on the new content.

A group of 33 MBA students completed the pilot courses and were awarded certificates in August 2008. At that time, 18 Georgian faculty members that were trained through the program were also honored.

Alexander Kvitashvili, Georgia's Minister of Labor, Health, and Social Affairs, lauded the work of AIHA and its partners, stating that the program was "helping to prepare a new generation of health administrators capable of playing a leading role in the country's reform efforts."

In the coming year, partners will expand existing courses and implement short-term certificate programs for practicing professionals.

## Professional Development in HIV Medicine Program Expands Knowledge, Expertise of Russian AIDS Physicians

AIHA and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) conducted the third in a series of training workshops under the Professional Development in HIV Medicine Program in October, successfully concluding activities planned for the first year of this public-private partnership designed to rapidly strengthen the knowledge and skills of clinicians who provide HIV-related care in Russia.

Some 22 physicians from 16 of Russia's most heavily affected regions gathered in Moscow October 20-23 for the four-day training, which focused on various aspects of clinical care, including how to define treatment failure, switching ART regimens, short and long-term side effects of ARV medications, and HIV drug resistance. Another key component of the workshop focused on strengthening the presentation skills of participants.

The combination of advanced clinical skills in HIV medicine,

improved knowledge of clinical research and evidence-based practice, and expanded communication and presentation skills participants acquire through the program is helping them become thought leaders and agents of change in their own institutions and communities. Many have reported that they conduct lectures and training activities for peers and colleagues, sharing what they have learned with a broader group of healthcare providers.

As a result, care for PLWH is becoming more accessible — particularly outside major metropolitan areas such as Moscow and St. Petersburg where there are few doctors experienced with HIV and AIDS medicine. During 2008, participants reported treating some 3,750 adults living with HIV, including 356 pregnant women living with HIV who were provided prophylactic care to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus.

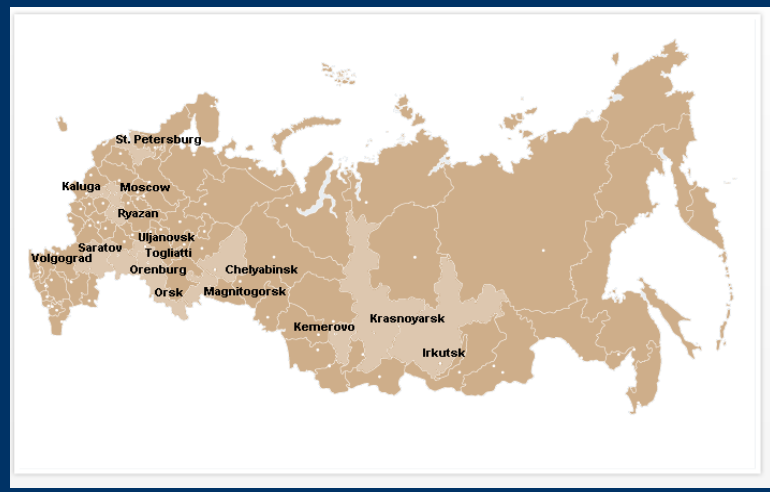
Based on statistics from their

respective regions, these numbers are projected to increase significantly in the near future, with the number of adults receiving ART rising to 5,453 and pregnant women receiving PMTCT services more than doubling to 733.

In addition to the three workshops, skills building distance education courses on evidence-based practice and developing and using case studies as a clinical education tool were conducted through the program.

AIHA launched an interactive program Web site in May 2008 to facilitate collaboration, communication, and ready access to a host of HIV/AIDS resources, protocols, case studies, and other useful information. The site is used not only by program participants, but also by other clinicians seeking knowledge about HIV-related treatment and care.

Professional Development in HIV Medicine Target Regions: 2007-2008



Russia Professional Development in HIV Medicine Program participants with AIHA and GSK representatives at a recent training workshop. Launched in late 2007, the program marks the first time an international pharmaceutical company has joined forces with the public sector to combat Russia's HIV/AIDS epidemic by building human resource capacity in high-burden regions throughout the country. Program activities are funded jointly by USAID, PEPFAR, and GSK.

## Regional Knowledge Hub Conducts Advanced ART Training for Azerbaijani Medical Professionals

Knowledge Hub experts traveled to Baku October 27-31 to facilitate an advanced ART course for 25 Azerbaijani clinicians.

Kyiv clinicians Dr. Svetlana Antoniak of Lavra AIDS Clinic and Olga Nikolayeva of the Ukrainian National TB Institute served as faculty for the workshop, which focused on managing ART and common opportunistic infections, particularly tuberculosis, STIs, and hepatitis B and C.

In addition, participants learned more about potential side effects of ARV medicines, how to switch drug regimens, and close monitoring for immune reconstitution syndrome (IRIS) and drug resistance.

Sessions also focused on treating patients who are active injecting drug users, including substitution therapy and other methods of rehabilitation from drug dependence. Since 2004, both Azerbaijan

and Ukraine have offered substitution therapy programs, but there is currently little if any connection between these programs and HIV treatment services in Azerbaijan. Treatment of infectious diseases and other conditions common to active drug users was also discussed.

To date, the Knowledge Hub has trained more than 50 Azerbaijani health and allied professionals in comprehensive HIV/AIDS care.

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***Because TB is a leading cause of death among PLWH worldwide, many Knowledge Hub courses place a strong emphasis on effectively preventing and managing TB in patients living with HIV or AIDS.***

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## Volga River AIDS Alliance Program Concludes, Achieving Marked Improvements in HIV Care and Treatment Capacity

AIHA and AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) concluded their public-private partnership known as the Volga River AIDS Alliance (VRA) and designed to scale up ART and related care in target regions of Russia.

Launched in mid-2006 with support from USAID under its Global Development Alliance, the VRA built on the work of two AIHA HIV/AIDS care and treatment partnerships that linked healthcare institutions in the city of Togliatti with counterparts in Providence, Rhode Island, and those in Saratov Oblast with counterparts in Bemidji, Minnesota.

Both Russian sites were selected to receive ARVs and other support through the Global Fund in 2006. Consequently, the overall objective of the VRA was to scale up ART and related care to some 500 PLWH in Togliatti and 1,000 in Saratov Oblast by the end of 2008.

To accomplish this, AIHA and AHF worked together to train primary level healthcare providers on HIV/AIDS-related treatment, care, and support. Training was also extended to narcologists, TB and STI specialists, and other care providers to develop expanded care teams capable of meeting the varied needs of PLWH.

At the same time, AIHA and AHF collaborated with partners in Togliatti and Saratov to develop and implement an integrated care model at primary level institutions that addresses the main problems facing PLWH, including substance abuse, hepatitis C, tuberculosis, and other opportunistic infections.

In support of the new care model, partners established a clinical care management information system that links all care sites thereby improving continuity and quality of healthcare services for PLWH.

A final aspect of the project focused on improving cooperation with local NGOs and community-based organizations that provide services and support to PLWH and their families.

“Overall, the amount of knowledge gained through the program has been very impressive in both regions,” AHF clinical expert Dr. Scott C. Howell reports.

“Our basic approach was very practically oriented, so at this point, the physicians in Togliatti and Saratov have very good clinical knowledge and are ready to proceed to the next level of professional development,” Howell says.

“It has been an honor to participate in the delivery of care to the Russian people on every one of these trips,” he concludes.



Dr. Scott C. Howell and AIDS Certified Registered Nurse Monica Rutherford with clinicians at Volsk Central Rayon Hospital in Russia's Saratov Oblast in the fall of 2007. The facility was one of several clinics where mentoring was conducted by AHF clinical experts through the VRA program.



Howell and Rutherford with the Togliatti area clinicians who attended the HIV-TB clinical training conducted through the program in May 2008.

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***Recognizing that social support plays a critical role in effective treatment, adherence, and the overall wellbeing of PLWH, Knowledge Hub courses stress a multidisciplinary team approach to HIV/AIDS care.***

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## Regional Knowledge Hub Conducts Training of Trainers Course for Tajik Social Workers Involved in HIV/AIDS Care

Two social worker trainers from the Kyiv-based Regional Knowledge Hub joined WHO experts in Dushanbe September 1-5 to conduct a training of trainers course for 23 Tajik NGO workers and social welfare officers.

Participants hailed from AIDS Centers, NGOs, and government administrations spanning Tajikistan.

Olena Tymoshok of Chas Zhyttia+ in Kyiv and Oksana Nakhayeva of Alternatyva in

Odessa facilitated the five-day workshop, which focused on the basics of HIV infection, ART, and critical role social support and counseling plays in effective care for PLWH. The workshop also focused on building the training skills of participants with a strong concentration on adult learning methodologies.

In addition to lectures, the training consisted of practical sessions and role plays designed to build hands-on counseling skills needed for

various situations, including before and after testing individuals for HIV and how to discuss treatment and prevention with pregnant women.

Special attention was given to the notion that ART has made HIV more of a chronic disease than the death sentence it was once seen as. Faculty therefore stressed the importance of counseling and social support, which has been proven to greatly improve treatment adherence and patient outcomes.

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***With USAID support, AIHA and the Russian Red Cross provided reproductive health education to 899 female inmates in Irkutsk Oblast, trained 62 medical and non-medical prison workers, trained 65 inmates as peer educators, and facilitated 855 clinical examinations for women at three prison colonies in Bozoi village.***

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## AIHA, Russian Red Cross Wrap Up Project to Improve Reproductive Health Services for Incarcerated Women

Thanks to a collaboration between AIHA and the Irkutsk Branch of the Russian Red Cross (RRC), hundreds of incarcerated women in prison colonies in Eastern Siberia have improved their knowledge of reproductive health issues and been afforded greater access to related counseling, health services, and patient education.

Launched in February 2007, this USAID-supported project has resulted in nearly 900 inmates living in three prison settlements in the Irkutsk Oblast village of Bozoi receiving comprehensive information about STIs, contraception, and other reproductive health topics.

At the conclusion of project activities in September 2008, AIHA and RRC had also trained 65 inmates as peer educators and provided comprehensive training on reproductive health issues to more than 60 medical staff

and non-medical workers from the prison colonies.

In addition, infectious disease specialists, OB/GYNs, and other reproductive health practitioners provided more than 850 clinical consultations to inmates, demonstrating marked improvements in access to much-needed care and services over the life of the project.

Together, the three prison installations house more than 2,000 female inmates — 20 percent of whom are living with HIV. In response, inmate and peer education had a strong focus on HIV, including stigma and discrimination, prevention methods, and treatment options. Medical staff initiated ART for a total of 17 women during the project.

Sharing her point of view on the training workshops she attended, Inna Barkhatova, a feldsher-obstetrician at Colony No. 40 Health Station, says,

“This was the first time we were told about medications in a simple, understandable way. Before, the AIDS Center provided some training, but there were many things that we did not understand. Through this project, we are now working with ARV medications and can see how they work and what their side effects are first-hand.”

AIHA and RRC also set up resource centers with educational materials, anatomical charts, and models at each settlement as part of a sustainable knowledge improvement plan to help the women make a successful transition when released. Stressing the value of these centers, Irkutsk Oblast Department of Corrections Chief Psychologist Elena Ageeva says, “In a situation where we have to install bunk beds to have sufficient sleeping space for inmates, the administration allocated rooms for these resource centers.”





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AIHA, its partnerships, and programs represent one of the US healthcare sector's most coordinated responses to a broad range of issues affecting global health. Our programs contribute to sustainable change by providing the broad-based management and programmatic support necessary to help donor institutions and health systems coordinate other forms of government or privately-sponsored development assistance.

AIHA operates under various cooperative agreements and grants from US and international donor agencies including the US Agency for International Development; the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief; the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration; the World Health Organization; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and the German Society for Technical Cooperation.

**For more information about AIHA, please visit us on the Web at [www.aiha.com](http://www.aiha.com)**

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## Knowledge Hub, All-Ukrainian Network of PLWH Conduct Trainings on HIV and TB Co-infection Treatment for IDUs

The Knowledge Hub conducted a series of six trainings on the treatment of TB and HIV co-infection in injecting drug users who are undergoing substitution therapy during fall 2008.

Working in close collaboration with the All-Ukrainian Network of PLWH, Knowledge Hub experts trained more than 100 Ukrainian clinicians and care providers on various aspects of managing the complexities of administering ART and tuberculosis treatment for patients in drug abuse rehabilitation programs that use substitution therapy.

Faculty for the series of five-day training workshops included Drs. Tatiana Suprunenko of Lavra AIDS

Clinic, Andrei Karachevsky of Kyiv Medical University's Department of Psychiatry and Narcology, and Olga Nikolayeva of the National Medical Academy for Post-graduate Education's TB Department, as well as Olga Tykhonenko, a social worker at the Kyiv-based NGO Chas Zhyttia+.

Designed to strengthen care provider capacity to effectively counsel, treat, and support care for patients with addiction issues, the trainings covered topics such as screening for mental disorders common among drug users and linking patients to critical medical and social services.

Clinical sessions focused on ART, tuberculosis treatment

and prophylaxis, harm reduction, monitoring and switching ARV regimens, and the basics of substitution therapy.

With support of the Global Fund, more than 36,000 PLWH in Ukraine now have access to HIV treatment and support.

The Regional Knowledge Hub has to date trained some 2,000 Ukrainian physicians, nurses, social workers, policy makers, and other care providers in comprehensive treatment, care, and support for PLWH, thus contributing to the nation's capacity to more effectively combat its HIV/AIDS epidemic.



**Long-time Knowledge Hub trainer Dr. Svetlana Antoniak of the Lavra AIDS Clinic in Kyiv leads a discussion during the November training workshop.**