

## EMS Training Centers Open Doors for Collaboration

AIHA opened four new emergency medical service (EMS) training centers last fall. Centers in Kyiv, Ukraine; Moscow, Russia; Tallinn, Estonia; and Tbilisi, Georgia were launched, following extensive preparation and training with US partners. They join four EMS centers opened in 1994 in Almaty, Kazakstan; Chisinau, Moldova; Vladivostok, Russia; and Yerevan, Armenia. As with the original centers, AIHA has provided training equipment and supplies, including backboards, splints, intubation materials, airway trainers and a basic set of office equipment. An important new component in each center's program is national disaster planning, which will allow the center to provide cross-hospital training and support.

The openings come at a time when CEE and NIS countries are seeing an increase in accident-related injury and death.

"We lose a lot of lives because of inadequate prehospital emergency care. We anticipate that the EMS center will help us lower that percentage," said Alexander Poladko, MD, director of the Kyiv EMS Center. He is also the head of the Department of Medical Catastrophes and Emergency Medical Services in the Ukrainian Ministry of Health.

Tbilisi EMS Center Director Dimitri Makhatadze participated in an EMS instruction course at the Yerevan center one month before the opening of his center in October. "The course was very useful," he noted. "I learned many new, practical skills in emergency response, disaster management and policy development."

The replication of the four existing EMS centers marks a new stage in the development of regional and systemwide approaches to emergency medical services. In upcoming months, EMS trainers from US partnerships will travel to the new centers to promote EMS training.

### **Tallinn, Estonia**

The EMS Center at Mustamäe Hospital in Tallinn, Estonia, opened on September 22. Teet Lainevee, chief doctor at Mustamäe, officiated at the ceremony and discussed the work of the training center, which is part of a larger disaster medical center designed to coordinate and unite the efforts of all emergency response organizations working in Estonia. Officials from private and public organizations and members of the hospital training team attended the opening ceremony. Dr. Peeter Mardna, director of the Office of Health Care, Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, and Toomas Savi, speaker of the Estonian Parliament, affirmed their support for the center during the opening. USAID officer Carl Duisberg said the center will strengthen pre-hospital care for health care providers throughout Estonia and other Baltic countries.

The opening coincided with a one-week advanced life support course by partners from The George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, DC.

### **Moscow, Russia**

The Moscow EMS Center opened on October 23 at the Institute of Continuing Education of the Federal Department of Medical, Biological and Emergency Problems, Ministry of Health and Medical Industries. Partners from the Travis County Emergency Medical Services facility in Austin, TX and Austin Mayor Bruce Todd joined Nikolai Trubilin, rector of the Institute of Continuing Education and former Minister of Health; Vladimir Reva, department head of the Institute and general director of the Federal Administration for Biomedical Problems and Disaster Medicine; Alexander Partin, director of the Vladivostok EMS Center; and other health care and government leaders from the Russian Federation in opening ceremonies.

With the establishment of the center, the City of Austin Department of Emergency Medical Services has entered into a partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Industries to train emergency medical personnel in disaster and emergency response.

**Tbilisi, Georgia**

The Tbilisi EMS Center opened on October 26. "This EMS Center marks the beginning of a new level of collaboration with our US partners," said Georgian Minister of Health Avtandil Jorbenadze, who addressed a crowd of health personnel and government officials from Tbilisi and Atlanta, GA.

Among those who attended the ceremony were Irakli Menagarishvili, deputy prime minister of health; William Courtney, US ambassador to Georgia; Paula Feeney, USAID country coordinator for Georgia; Gail Anderson, acting senior vice president of Grady Memorial Hospital; Dimitri Makhatadze, director of the EMS center; and Jim Smith, AIHA executive director. A reception at the US Embassy hosted by Ambassador Courtney followed the opening ceremonies.

**Kyyiv, Ukraine**

The Kyyiv EMS Center opened its doors on December 15. John Huger, USAID Mission to Ukraine; Ukrainian Ministry of Health officials; and US partners from Coney Island Hospital in Bronx, NY attended opening ceremonies.

"There is no match for the EMS Center in the Ukraine," said center director Poladko. "These training centers are capable of solving the most important tasks--primary specialization and upgrading the knowledge of physicians and nurses, as well as training of qualified paramedics." Poladko said he also envisions the new EMS center as a referral center for all of Ukraine.