

## HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Projects in Russia

### Building Capacity to Provide HIV/AIDS Treatment, Care, and Support

The Twinning Center's HIV/AIDS Treatment, Care, and Support Project in Russia builds on the success of four partnerships established by the American International Health Alliance (AIHA) in 2004 with USAID support.

The Saratov/Bemidji, St. Petersburg/New Haven, Orenburg/New York City, and Togliatti/Providence partnerships linked US institutions with significant experience providing high quality medical and social support services to people living with HIV with their counterparts in Russia. Working together, partners developed replicable HIV treatment and care models in the target regions focusing on four main areas:

- Care coordination and case management;
- Patient management and adherence;
- Patient access and retention; and
- HIV and TB detection and treatment.

AIHA provided direct technical assistance and support to these partnerships, conducting clinical trainings, replicating our model PMTCT program, establishing HIV/AIDS Information Resource Centers to enhance use of information and communications technology at partner institutions, and developing or adapting Russian-language publications on HIV/AIDS. In addition, AIHA and its partners collaborated closely with local health administrations to ensure sustainability of model programs developed through the partnerships.

With support from Russia's national HIV/AIDS program and international donor organizations such as the Global Fund, availability of antiretroviral medications has increased dramatically. Consequently, in 2006 AIHA and the Twinning Center began rolling out successful HIV treatment, care, and support models in the PEPFAR priority regions of St. Petersburg and Orenburg Oblast. AIHA's scale-up activities in these regions largely replicate and expand on partnership accomplishments.

Clinical trainings on ART and opportunistic infections —

### Russia Country Overview

Over the past decade, Russia has been home to one of the largest rates of new HIV infections in the world. As of December 2007, the national HIV prevalence rate among people aged 15-49 was 1.1 percent and an estimated 940,000 people under the age of 49 were living with HIV or AIDS. Russia's HIV epidemic has long been driven by injecting drug use, which is still the primary mode of transmission. Heterosexual transmission is on the rise, however, as is mother-to-child transmission.



With support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the United States Government team in country, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center currently manages two partnerships in Russia.

coupled with onsite mentoring and other support activities provided by US partners — are successfully building district and regional networks of well qualified healthcare providers.

The project is helping prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV by improving coordination of related services, developing an institutional assessment tool, conducting clinical trainings, and supporting implementation of a specially designed database that facilitates effective monitoring of vertical transmission and prevention services. It also combats stigma and discrimination while at the same time arming a larger healthcare workforce with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively manage patients through Primary HIV Care and Tolerance Building workshops.

Additional concentration areas include management of HIV and TB co-infection, palliative care, HIV case management, ART adherence support with focus on patients who are injecting drug users, and quality assurance through chart audits and patient satisfaction surveys.

As of May 2009, the Twinning Center's HIV/AIDS Treatment, Care, and Support Project in Russia supports more than 4,400 patients who are currently receiving

ART at pilot sites in Orenburg Oblast and St. Petersburg.

Other key accomplishments to date include:

- 2,545 health and allied professionals trained in HIV treatment, care, and support (TCS), including the provision of ART;
- 47 Russian healthcare professionals completed a related TCS training of trainers course and 20 more have been trained as master trainers;
- 100 percent of primary level infectious disease specialists in target regions have been trained to manage ART;
- HIV/AIDS Information Resource Centers were established at pilot sites to provide healthcare workers and patients with access to evidence-based HIV/AIDS literature;
- a case management system was introduced at AIDS Centers and other care institutions; and
- the system of coordinating care among substance abuse and primary care clinics was improved.



Onsite training and mentoring plays a critical role in ensuring quality of care. Here, clinicians from Elmhurst Hospital Center in New York consult with their partners in Orenburg, Russia.



A key objective of the Twinning Center's HIV/AIDS Treatment, Care, and Support Project in Russia is to help transition management of care for PLWH to the primary care level by training clinicians.



The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center is a project of the American International Health Alliance funded by the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief through a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration.

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