

# Road to Results

ACHIEVING SUCCESS STEP BY STEP

## **“Mini-Residency” Program in Family Medicine in Uzbekistan Helps Doctors Improve Clinical Knowledge and Skills**

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On May 11, the USAID Country Representative of Uzbekistan James L. Goggin and the Deputy Minister of Health of Uzbekistan Marat Khodjibekov presented certificates to the first three medical doctor general practitioners (GPs) from Ferghana Oblast who completed a two-week “mini-residency” program at the Tashkent International Medical Clinic (TIMC).

The “mini-residency” program supports the Government of Uzbekistan’s health sector reform strategy, which includes strengthening family health services in primary health care facilities (known by the Russian acronym SVP). The focus on primary health care enables the population to obtain a range of basic health care services from a family doctor close to their home.

This new course was designed by the USAID-funded ZdravPlus technical assistance program, TIMC, and the U.S. Embassy’s Medical Officer to allow Uzbek family physicians from pilot rayons in Ferghana Oblast to experience first-hand family medicine following international standards. The first graduates of the course are Abduvali Mamazoitov from Kapayangi SVP in Beshariq Rayon, Abdumutal Sarimsakov from Honobod SVP in Quva Rayon, and Nabizhon Kupasov from Tobul SVP in Beshariq Rayon.

The ZdravPlus Program plans to fund this new initiative throughout 2001 and 2002. Each ten day “mini-residency” allows three doctors working in primary health care facilities (SVPs) in pilot regions in Ferghana Oblast to receive hands-on family practice experience including Western style patient-centered care and counseling. The course provides newly retrained doctors with a chance to learn more about the goals of the Ministry of Health in promoting general practice and family medicine. Family medicine is a relatively new concept in the

former Soviet republics where highly specialized doctors in specialty clinics and facilities provide the majority of health care services.

The ten-day program provides a clinic walk-through and covers topics such as family medicine, patient-centered care, doctor-patient interaction, personal health and hygiene, urgent care, laboratory diagnostics, instrument sterilization, and clinic management and administration. Clinical rounds also are conducted. Advanced skills workshops are provided to participants on casting, suturing, and other topics. Modern and appropriate reference materials are given to each participant to complement topics covered.

Doctors who have completed the program said they had learned a lot through hands-on instruction and practice with modern medical equipment. Much of the equipment they became familiar with at TIMC is similar to equipment they have recently received in their own facilities thanks to a World Bank credit. One participant commented that he was no longer afraid to consult a reference book during a patient



*Participating doctors demonstrate newly acquired skills on the clinic mannequin*



The USAID-funded ZdravPlus Program provides technical assistance and training to improve the health of Central Asian populations by improving health delivery systems



consultation when he had a question or difficult diagnosis. He also mentioned learning the importance of educating patients by better communicating with them about their diagnosis and treatment. Several participants enjoyed learning how the clinic was so efficiently organized and managed.

The “mini-residency” program is supervised by the clinic’s medical director, Dr. Jan Marie Reimers (Dr. Khin Aye Aye held this responsibility until June 2001). Other medical and administrative staff employed by the clinic, including a course coordinator, Dr. Inom Tashmatov work with Dr. Reimers to conduct the program. Participants are selected on a

competitive basis after submitting letters of interest to the Ferghana Oblast Health Department, the Ferghana Oblast Association of SVPs, and ZdravPlus.

TIMC is a non-profit, non-governmental organization chartered to provide health care to the international community of Uzbekistan. The clinic was founded in 1994 to provide quality western standard health care to the expatriate population living and working in Tashkent and offers a range of preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic services in accordance with the principles of family medicine. The availability of TIMC provides a unique opportunity to allow Uzbek doctors to gain first-hand experience of how family medicine is practiced in line with international standards in their own country.

The ZdravPlus Program provides training and technical assistance to the Government of Uzbekistan to improve the efficiency and quality of care provided in primary health care centers in selected areas of the country. Its training courses provide Uzbek health workers with valuable information and new skills on various aspects of primary health care and health management.

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