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Contacts: in the United States

James P. Smith
AIHA Executive Director
(202) 789-1136
jim@aiha.com

in Kiev, Ukraine

Alyona Gerasimova
AIHA Regional Director, West NIS
(38-044) 490-3065
alyona@aiha.kiev.ua

**American International Health Alliance and WHO Regional Office for Europe
Launch Regional Knowledge Hub for the Care and Treatment of HIV/AIDS in Eurasia**

Washington, DC, and Kiev, Ukraine, March 9, 2004—The American International Health Alliance (AIHA)—in conjunction with the World Health Organization’s Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Euro)—is pleased to announce the official opening on March 10, 2004, of the **Regional Knowledge Hub for the Care and Treatment of HIV/AIDS in Eurasia**. The Knowledge Hub, which is made possible through a grant from *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ), will be located at the Kiev Medical Academy of Post Graduate Education (KMAPO).

The Knowledge Hub will serve as a crucial capacity-building mechanism for reaching WHO’s “3 by 5” targets in the region by providing a unified, evidence-based, organizational framework for national efforts to build the health system capacity necessary to provide high quality care to HIV-infected individuals. Its activities will focus primarily on designated priority countries such as Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, and Ukraine, which are currently experiencing some of the fastest growing rates of new HIV infections in the world.

Tasked with developing a cadre of well-trained, knowledgeable, and skilled professionals who will work in close collaboration with community-based organizations dedicated to providing care and social support to HIV-positive individuals, the Knowledge Hub is part of a synergistic network that will include two similar centers—one that focuses on harm reduction and another that concentrates on HIV tracking and surveillance. These centers are designed to build technical capacity in countries throughout the region as they work to effectively access and utilize grants available through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria and other large-scale donor organizations. All three centers operate within the framework of WHO’s GTZ-funded project, “Capability Strengthening for Improved Utilization of Financial Resources to fight HIV/AIDS.”

While the Knowledge Hub will provide some direct technical assistance and help to establish collaborative links among institutions involved in HIV-related care in the

region, its broader purpose is to serve as a coordinating mechanism. As such, it will tap into the strengths of the many international and local organizations that are committed to assisting these countries meet the challenges of providing clinical services and social support to HIV-infected people.

The Ukrainian AIDS Prevention Center, Lavra AIDS Clinic at the Kiev Institute of Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases, the Kiev City AIDS Center, and the Ukrainian branch of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance are already playing an important role in the Knowledge Hub's efforts, as are numerous international organizations such as AIDS Healthcare Foundation-Global Immunity (AHF-GI), the International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care (IAPAC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and the International Training and Education Center on HIV (I-TECH).

As the Knowledge Hub expands its programs throughout Ukraine and to other countries in the region, it will actively seek the knowledge and expertise of additional strategic partners. For example, Odessa's Southern Ukraine AIDS Education Center (SUAEC)—which has been acknowledged as a “Center of Excellence” by WHO—has already been engaged to provide technical assistance and training on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV, drawing on their own experience of reducing the rate of vertical transmission by 75 percent in less than three years.

Expected guests at the opening ceremony include Ukraine's Vice Prime Minister for Humanitarian Policy Dmytro Tabachnik, Minister of Health Andriy Pidaev, WHO/EURO Regional Adviser on HIV/AIDS and STIs Srdan Matic, and German Ambassador to Ukraine H.E. Dietmar Studemann. In addition, representatives of various donor agencies and national and international non-governmental organizations will also attend.

The opening will be held at the Kiev Medical Academy of Post Graduate Education (9, Dorogozhytskaya Street) on March 10 at 2:30 p.m. and will include the launch of the Knowledge Hub Website, a press conference, and reception.