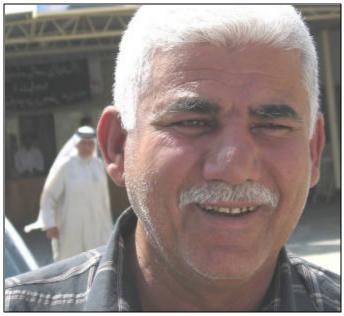# Efforts To Improve Hospitals in Iraq

Photo: USAID/Ben Barber

"There was a bad smell and unhealthy environment. Now it's gone and there are no more bad effects on the health of the patients and staff."

- Ali Khadm, assistant hospital administrator

First Person

The Al Majar Al Kabir medical facility, located in Southeastern Iraq near the border with Iran, serves about 800 outpatients each day and seventy inpatients, some of them undergoing major surgery. USAD officials visited the hospital soon after the downfall of the Saddam Hussein regime and saw that the unsanitary storage of sewage and other waste inside the building needed to be fixed.

An Iraqi subcontractor was hired to excavate the earth, lay pipes, and build new septic tanks outside the hospital compound. Fresh clods of brown earth still lie atop the lot outside this city's main hospital after the U.S.-funded installation of a sanitary septic tank system ended years of filthy smells and wastes inside the medical facility.

Before that, the septic tank was inside the hospital and it was difficult to empty it when full according to Ali Khadm, assistant administrator of this hospital. Tanker trucks now can empty the septic tanks without creating additional mess inside the hospital. The project was carried out under the auspices of the Coalition Provisional Authority.

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