



SUCCESS STORY

A Strong Workforce Enhances HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care

A USAID-funded project provides HIV/AIDS training and professional mentorship to critical health workers

In the Russian Federation, the availability of antiretroviral medications has increased in some areas, such as St. Petersburg and Orenburg *oblast*. Although this is a promising sign, the greater availability of these lifesaving drugs has resulted in a rising demand for health care workers trained in the provision of antiretroviral treatment (ART) and related care.



American International Health Alliance Archives

In a St. Petersburg AIDS center, a doctor consults with a patient.

To meet this growing need, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), supports the HIV Treatment, Care and Support Project, which assists in the scale-up of HIV/AIDS services by training infectious disease specialists working in targeted institutions.

Since the project began, it has made significant progress toward its goal. As of March 2008, 100 percent of all district-level infectious disease specialists working in St. Petersburg were trained to initiate and manage ART in adult patients.

In Orenburg *oblast*, 61 percent of all primary-level infectious disease specialists have been trained to date.

In Russia, USAID support is building a network of trained professionals who can provide high-quality primary care and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS.

In addition to the project's training courses, clinical mentoring plays a critical role by fostering professional development in practical training, follow-up study, and direct consultation. For medical professionals new to the complexities of HIV/AIDS care, mentoring offers an opportunity to discuss difficult or advanced cases with peers and, perhaps more importantly, with experts.