

# Heal Ukraine Group

April 2023 Newsletter



In Collaboration  
with:



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A war-ravaged landscape. Twisted sheets of steel framework that were once a hospital. Burnt-out husks of Russian tanks dotting the roadside. Explosions erupt from an apartment building and soon dust wafts in thick gray clouds as emergency personnel work tirelessly to clear rubble in hopes of finding civilians underneath debris in Uman, only two hours from Kyiv. The fierce fighting continues in eastern Ukraine as the war persists with no end in sight, and the stream of wounded civilians and combatants is decimating already overwhelmed healthcare facilities throughout the country.

The Heal Ukraine Group ([HUG](#)) is a coalition of Boston-based healthcare professionals working to provide critically needed medical supplies, lifesaving intervention, and education directly and accountably, where resources are needed, including where rubble is being dismantled and the search and treatment of survivors continues. We emphasize evidence-based practices and assure accountability in our processes.

In collaboration with the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization Global Medical Knowledge Alliance ([GMKA](#)), critically needed medical supplies and equipment are procured and delivered to our Ukrainian colleagues on the frontlines. To date, the Heal Ukraine Group (HUG) has supplied tens of thousands of lifesaving surgical materials and medical equipment, ranging from portable ultrasounds, cardiac monitors, and mechanical ventilators to wound vacuum therapy units, boxes of surgical staples and sutures, and surgical headlamps. HUG works with sponsors and partners in Boston and with the outstanding team at Lake Country Medical Aid to Ukraine ([LCMAU](#)), a non-profit organization in Georgia led by Dr. Nicolas Chronos and Ralph Olson, that has raised and dispersed significant funds to support these directed and validated medical relief efforts.

HUG's imperative remains to sustain Ukraine's healthcare delivery as best as possible to conserve the provision of proper medical services for Ukrainians during the war. For as long as the war persists, our support remains for Ukrainians as they push ever forward in resistance.

Our work, detailed below cannot be completed without the full and generous support of philanthropy.

Please join us in support of Ukraine as the country faces a growing healthcare crisis.



*Individual stories highlighting accomplishments of the HUG team may be found below. The faces of Ukrainian patients and healthcare workers are blurred to protect their identities at this time of war.*



## Update on Transplantation Initiative

Last fall, from October through December, a team of 13 Ukrainian clinicians observed transplantations at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in Boston, a procedure largely outsourced abroad in Ukraine. Dr. Serguei Melnitchouk, a HUG founding member and MGH Ukrainian-American cardiothoracic and transplant surgeon, led the intensive training program and guided the cohort of clinicians through transplant procedures and extensive pre- and post-operative treatments. Now, thanks to this initiative organized in conjunction with Dr. Rudolf Myhovich of the Ukraine Christian Medical Association (CMA), the dedicated Ukrainian medical team is confidently conducting lung transplants for patients in Ukraine in a newly opened lung transplantation center, and new opportunities arise for the development of specialized medical care in the country. In May, Dr. Melnitchouk and the HUG cooperative will welcome another cardiac surgeon from the Ukrainian team to continue ongoing transfer of knowledge and skills.

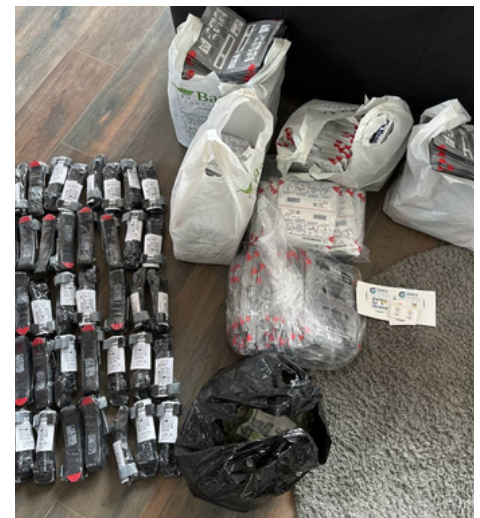


[Recent news](#) coverage on this exciting story in Ukrainian.

[NPR's coverage](#) from December.

## Delivery of Medical Supplies to the Frontlines

Ongoing fulfillment of medical supply requests from a number of medical facilities across Ukraine continues as the country faces an endless and violent war. Our recent tranche of medical supplies, supported by LCMAU and GMKA, included the successful delivery of a variety of tactical supplies, ten quality emergency medical kit bags, and a handheld patient monitor. The tactical supplies, which included tourniquets, hemostatics, hemorrhaging control clamps, and splints, were delivered to medics at medical outposts on Ukraine's frontlines who battle daily to save lives. The majority of the wounded are soldiers in need of treatment for shrapnel, some have bullet wounds. Medics work tirelessly to restore vital functions, and following stabilization, evacuate patients to the nearest hospitals. Similarly, the medical kit bags, now in the hands of ER doctors stationed on ambulances, provide first aid supplies necessary for trauma care and treatment while on the move to hospitals. Near Bakhmut, a frontline hospital now has a handheld patient monitor, a device designed to be easily transported and used to measure patient vital signs and potential arrhythmias. Without this essential device, the recognition of patient clinical deterioration, indicated through subtle changes in vital signs, is delayed and consequently hinders timely medical intervention. The procurement and delivery of essential medical supplies and devices is necessary to sustain healthcare services in Ukraine, especially as the fighting intensifies on the ground.



*Loading supplies in a GMKA volunteer's car to be transported from Vienna to Kyiv*





## The Harvard Medical Scholars at Risk (SAR) Program

Since the onset of the war in February of 2022, brought upon by Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, HUG has channeled their activities and resources to address the healthcare crisis in Ukraine and spearheads the Harvard-HUG Medical SAR program. As you may know from previous newsletters, the aims of this program are to bring Ukrainian medical practitioners for observerships at Harvard-affiliated hospitals so that they can gain new knowledge and skills with the idea of then disseminating their knowledge upon return to Ukraine. In addition to the knowledge and skills that Ukrainian clinicians receive through this initiative, many new relationships have been forged, which help to create a network for international collaboration able to fortify and repair medical care and delivery in Ukraine.

One such relationship is between Dr. Vadym Vus, a visiting Ukrainian family doctor and Dr. Andrew Liteplo, a Ukrainian-American doctor, Chief of the Division of Emergency Ultrasound and Director of the Center for Ultrasound Research and Education (CURE) at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). The two met on Dr. Vus's first day of his observership at MGH, when Dr. Liteplo approached Dr. Vus, speaking in Ukrainian. Immediately, they began discussion on their shared focus of work in ultrasound imaging and diagnosis, and in education and training of ultrasound methodology.

Prior to the war, it could take days to get an ultrasound in Ukraine, even more so for resource limited environments like the countryside. Exacerbating this, ultrasound performance was limited to physicians, specifically doctors trained as sonographers, unlike in the U.S. where other types of trained specialists can complete ultrasounds. "[Many] said it was impossible for a family doctor to give an ultrasound" says Dr. Vadym, but now after two years of medical reform accelerated by COVID and the war, Dr. Vadym, a rural family doctor, leads the FOCUS POCUS ultrasound team that provides training to a variety of medical clinicians, including nurses, physician assistants, military personnel, and paramedics, in sonography and point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS), a method of imaging used for rapid diagnosis, as opposed to traditional radiology-based ultrasound, performed by the clinician at the bedside, and the results are immediately integrated into patient care. This has tremendous benefits for patient care because it can provide rapid life-saving information in seconds; the procedure is also safe and inexpensive. During this time of chronic warfare, life-threatening injuries, like pneumothorax and abdominal bleeding or even shrapnel not visible by X-ray imaging, can now be identified quickly via POCUS for immediate and life-saving intervention in the operating room. Similarly, through the CURE, Dr. Liteplo supports global health efforts with international courses designed to educate and train participants- residents, medical students, and fellows, in a variety of POCUS applications and techniques. Most recently, he traveled with his team to Ghana to provide a bedside ultrasound course, disseminating the knowledge and skills necessary for proper ultrasound clinical use. On top of providing a platform for education in ultrasound diagnostics, the CURE researches new applications for POCUS and improvement in diagnostic imaging. "We are democratizing this technology, putting a powerful tool in the hands of everybody, which is facilitated as the price of the devices continues to fall," says Dr. Liteplo.

Throughout his observership in Boston, Dr. Vus consulted with Dr. Liteplo to expand his knowledge and skills in ultrasound, learning of advanced ultrasonographic techniques and different applications of ultrasound, including cardiac, musculoskeletal, procedural, and even of the sinuses, which is not currently used in Ukraine. Prior to his return, Dr. Vus began sharing his observations and newfound knowledge at weekly rounds with Ukrainian colleagues, providing fruitful discussion and the preliminary steps to implementing improved methods of education and teaching for ultrasonography as seen during his observership. Together, they plan to further broaden the scope of ultrasound education in Ukraine and research its use and potential. Dr. Liteplo is hoping to travel to Ukraine soon to teach POCUS to physicians who provide first line care to injured soldiers and civilians. He plans to meet with Dr. Vus to collaborate in additional training to the FOCUS POCUS team in advanced applications like nerve blocks. The goal is to improve patient care in Ukraine by further disseminating POCUS education to fellow Ukrainians in an effort to broaden ultrasound use and application in the country.



Dr. Vus and Dr. Liteplo at the CURE at MGH in Boston.  
Dr. Vus holds his certificate of completion from SAR.



Please join us at a **benefit concert for Ukraine** presented by JCC Greater Boston and HUG with live music by Slava Tolstoy and band, **May 11th 7-9pm at Temple Emanuel**.

Please RSVP here: <https://e.givesmart.com/events/vAN/>. Minimum donation of \$36 per person to attend. 100% of all ticket proceeds & donations to be distributed to HUG and JCC Solominka in Dnipro, Ukraine.

This **Saturday, May 6, at 7PM** please join us at **Brookline Booksmith for the Hour of War—Poetry from Ukraine**, with a showcase of poets, translators, and artists from four new books that consider what it means to be Ukrainian during unthinkable times. Register [here](#).

As proven through the cardiac monitors kindly donated and delivered to Ukraine within a week of the request, HUG recognizes how professional and personal networks can facilitate the efficient procurement and delivery of urgently needed supplies. **With this, we share below an up-to-date list of the most requested and currently needed supplies in hopes to receive as in-kind donations:**

**Defibrillators**

**Cardiac monitors (as many as possible)**

**Otoscopes**

**ECG machines**

**Rapid Infusers (x2 stationary, x1 for evacuation vehicle) and Disposable kits.**

*Please contact us at [info@healukrainegroup.org](mailto:info@healukrainegroup.org) if you have an item available to donate.*

We are grateful for the many contributions donated through the Art Auction Gala, Colors of Peace exhibit, Pavlo Gintov, and Lake Country Aid Concert fundraisers.

Thank you for considering a donation:

<https://www.gofundme.com/>



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