

Heal Ukraine Group

July 2022 Newsletter



On February 24th. of this year, the world lay as bystanders to Russia's invasion into Ukraine. Watching in shock, as homes, hospitals, and schools in a free country became a battlefield, and millions of civilians were besieged by the calamity of an escalating war. Our Ukrainian friends and colleagues desperately need support and resources to respond to their immediate humanitarian needs.

The Heal Ukraine Group is a coalition of Boston-based healthcare professionals working to provide critically needed medical supplies, lifesaving intervention, and education directly and accountably to the frontlines, where rubble is dismantled and the search and treatment of survivors continues.

In collaboration with the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization GMKA (www.gmka.org), critically needed medical supplies and equipment are procured and delivered by surgeons on the frontlines directly to our Ukrainian colleagues. To date, the Heal Ukraine Group (HUG) (www.HealUkraineGroup.org) has supplied specialized surgical headlights, surgical instruments, electrosurgical units, and wound treatment materials, such as vacuum-assisted closure devices, to multiple hospitals across Ukraine. In addition, HUG has also worked with its supporters in Boston and with the Lake Country Medical Aid to Ukraine (www.lakecountryaid.org), a non-profit organization in Georgia, to raise significant funds to support these efforts.

Our work, detailed below could not have been completed without the full and generous support of philanthropy.

We must support Ukraine as it continues to face this growing humanitarian crisis.

Individual stories highlighting the 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.

GMKA Translation of ATLS Manual

The Heal Ukraine Group has poured efforts into three main categories of aid for Ukraine: the procurement and delivery of medical supplies to Ukrainian hospitals; the evacuation of critically injured Ukrainian children to the U.S. for medical treatment; and the production of critical educational materials in Ukrainian for medical providers and citizens. Just recently, the Global Medical Knowledge Alliance (GMKA) team, led by Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk and Dr. Serguei Melnitchouk, translated and disseminated the advanced trauma life support (ATLS) manual into Ukrainian. ATLS, briefly, is a comprehensive method to evaluate and treat trauma patients. Through standardizing the immediate management of victims of traumatic events, better life-saving care is given to patients. Now, with this translation, Ukrainian physicians are better equipped to approach the treatment of severely injured patients and ensure optimum care is provided. GMKA continues to create and translate educational content into the Ukrainian language to offer our Ukrainian colleagues evidence-based and peer-reviewed resources to help improve cancer and trauma care in Ukraine.





Dr. Serguei Melnitchouk's Personal Travels to Ukraine

This past April, I visited Ukraine as a volunteer of a non-profit organization called Global Response Management (GRM). Along with two trauma Nurse Practitioners from MGH, we visited three different hospitals – two in Western Ukraine (Rivne Oblast) and one close to Kyiv (Boyarka City Hospital). We were able to assess critical needs of the hospitals and established direct relationships with the trauma and general surgeons. During my stay, I taught hospital personnel how to triage trauma patients in mass casualty situations; and how to perform primary and secondary trauma surveys in the most common trauma scenarios, with instructions on how to manage the most common trauma injuries. Being a cardiothoracic surgeon myself, I enjoyed teaching in detail the management and treatment of chest trauma and vascular injuries. Additionally, we were able to deliver essential surgical supplies via GMKA to all three hospitals. During some nights, we had to seek refuge in a bomb shelter due to alerts of air raids. We witnessed destroyed infrastructure and burned hulks of Russian tanks on the roadsides. Being an actual eye witness to what is going on in Ukraine granted us first-hand assessment of the needs in hospitals. We were able to directly communicate with surgeons, physicians, and nurses, which helped us immensely, to deliver targeted aid of what is needed on the ground. Of note, the transport and delivery of donated equipment to target locations in Ukraine has been accomplished completely free of charge so far, thanks to an established network of reliable volunteers. These efforts must continue as long as Ukraine needs our support.



Ongoing Efforts to Supply Wound Vacuum Devices

As the war escalates, essential medical supplies are exhausted. Ukrainian hospitals and healthcare workers are overwhelmed with the sharp increase of trauma patients, and supply-chain issues and shortages have only worsened this matter. Urgently needed medical equipment is prioritized by our Ukrainian colleagues and HUG focuses on procuring and delivering these specified supplies. Multiple hospitals in Ukraine requested devices for negative pressure wound therapy that were fulfilled with the delivery of wound vacuum devices. The first, XLR8+ NPWT (negative pressure wound therapy), through GMKA and HUG, was sent to Rivne Regional Clinical Hospital and Boyarka City Hospital in Kyiv Oblast. The second, more affordable option, PragmaVac was procured in collaboration with Dr. Hisham, the founder of this novel low-resource focused and tested vacuum wound device. The device was reviewed and approved by Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk and an initial quantity of 20 PragmaVacs will be sent to Ukraine. Following satisfied feedback from Ukrainian physicians, a larger supply of PragmaVacs will be delivered.





Butterfly Ultrasounds to the Frontlines

In a multi-partnership collaboration between healthcare professionals, NGO and biotech, two Butterfly Network ultrasound devices are in use by Ukrainian physicians on the frontlines. The Butterfly Network ultrasounds were put into immediate use to support a range of care from anesthesia procedures to diagnosing war-related cardiac injuries. This arrangement was only made possible because of close collaboration between HUG, Health Tech Without Borders, and Butterfly Network, Inc, with special thanks to HUG team members Dr. Nataliia Serbyn and Dr. Jarone Lee (also the co-founder of Health Tech Without Borders www.htwb.org). The Ukrainian anesthesiologist who received the first Butterfly device commented on its ease of use: “Так. Мені дуже добре. Бо без нього я взагалі працював всліпу і по орієнтирах” (translated quote)- “Yes. Extremely good for me. Without it, I worked blindly relying only on landmarks”. These portable ultrasounds are integral to enhancing the immediate care of critically injured patients and grant driven insight to allow surgeons confidence to make quick bedside decisions.



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Newsletter designed, written and compiled by Yasmina Berkat in collaboration with Drs. Poznansky, Melnitchouk and Serbyn

Support the People of Ukraine

Every donation, no matter what size, will help doctors in Ukraine treat their patients and save lives.

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Thank you for considering a donation.

In Collaboration with:

