

Heal Ukraine Group

September 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 healthcare needs.

The Heal Ukraine Group (www.HealUkraineGroup.org) 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 Global Medical Knowledge Alliance (www.gmka.org), 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 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 healthcare 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.

Ongoing Efforts to Deliver Medical Supplies

Surgical staplers and staples in a range of sizes were recently delivered to Izum and went to immediate use in the Ukrainian operating room, closing traumatic wounds with minimal damage. These supplies were additionally sent to other hospitals in Ukraine located in Kramatorsk, Kharkiv and Kyiv. Along with the surgical staplers and consumables, three requested portable ultrasounds with accompanying tablets were delivered. The portable ultrasound devices are integral to the diagnosis of war-related cardiac injuries and improving surgeon confidence to make quick bedside decisions. An anesthesiologist at the field hospital commented on the use of the Butterfly Network portable ultrasounds, “Датчик бомба. Користуюсь завжди. Уже були такі випадки що прям дуже виручав. Як би не було то навіть і незнаю як би прийшлося виходити з такої ситуації.”

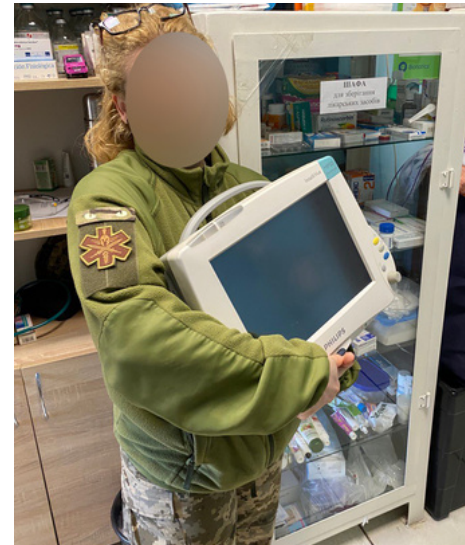
“The sensor is terrific! I always use it. There have already been such cases that it helped a lot. If I did not have it in my hands, I wouldn't even know how to deal with such a situation.”. These efforts were only possible through a multi-partnership collaboration between GMKA, Health Tech Without Borders (HTWB) (www.htwb.org), and HUG members, together with generous donations from Lake Country Aid.





Cardiac Monitors Delivered to Evacuation Cars

Similar recent achievements coordinated by the HUG team is the delivery of cardiac monitors to the Ukrainian Armed Forces physicians. Two monitors and one infusion pump now support evacuation cars stationed in Eastern Ukraine. These evacuation cars are repurposed commercial vehicles transformed for use as ambulances and refugee evacuation vehicles. Through employing these unique measures, Ukrainian soldiers are able to transport needed medical supplies and resources, and evacuate injured soldiers or civilians in the war zone. Following the purchase of these medical devices directly in Ukraine, registered volunteers delivered the supplies in-hand to the Ukrainian physicians who requested them. The donation of cardiac monitors enables Ukrainian physicians on the frontlines to better tackle trauma-related and cardiac injuries.



“Bringing it Back to Ukraine”: Ukrainian Medical Scholars to Harvard-affiliated Hospitals

Through a unique partnership, HUG and the Harvard Scholars at Risk (SAR) program led by Jane Unrue and supported by the Offices of the President and Provost at Harvard University, have established an innovative initiative to sponsor medical practitioners from Ukrainian academic institutions who develop transferrable skills via observerships at Harvard-affiliated hospitals. Each invited scholar studies at a hospital for up to 6 months in a specific area of inquiry that addresses educational requirements abruptly terminated by the invasion of Ukraine and/or advances knowledge of and capacity for improved delivery of medical care and services in their country. The aim is to provide learning that helps in the acute circumstances of an unprovoked war against their sovereign nation and simultaneously offers enduring skills that carry the promise to expand and advance medical care in times of peace.

Candidates are vetted and selected by HUG members from Harvard Medical School (HMS) including Drs. Melnitchouk, Hart and Poznansky in consultation with Harvard SAR associates and Ukrainian clinicians affiliated with hospitals and the Ministry of Health (MOH). Those chosen for participation -- based on qualifications, defined need of advancement in a given area of medicine, capacity to spread the newly acquired knowledge and skills, and other criteria like English proficiency -- are paired with committed mentors and supervisors within the Harvard medical and science faculty who have expertise in the identified topic and ability to fill the gap for Ukrainian colleagues. The overarching objective of this initiative, paralleling goals eloquently expressed by President Zelenskyy when recently addressing academicians, is to bring the teachings and newly developed skills back to Ukraine in order to foster regeneration and expansion of medical infrastructure and healthcare delivery. Metrics of success involve the progress of participating Ukrainian physicians to impact and improve the practice of medicine in Ukraine. HUG’s goal in conceptualizing and designing this initiative is to revive and revitalize, not simply repair and rebuild, medical infrastructure and delivery of care in Ukraine.



Hosts welcome Ukrainian Endocrinologist to study about delivery of transgender care.



Delivering Therapeutic Support for Children with Autism in Ukraine

Among the consequences of chronic warfare, one of the most significant is the social and psychological distress and subsequent decline in mental health of civilians. Many are forced to leave everything behind: their homes, their schools, and often, their family members. And with the loss of educational and therapeutic support combined with war stressors, many are catastrophically affected, especially individuals with autism. Autism Unity (<https://autismunity.org/about-us/>), led by Dmitriy Dribinskiy, in collaboration with HUG, is working to ensure children with autism and their families have access to sufficient therapeutic services, able to help them live fulfilling lives in safe and welcoming environments. Recent efforts from the non-profit include an initiative to bring technology to parents, specialists and centers working with children with autism in Ukraine. This technology includes locally donated laptops, updated with newest software, hardware, and installation of multi-language support systems. These tools will allow specialists to connect with families and provide them with critically needed services, especially at this time of war. Already over 60 laptops have been collected, with 25 currently en route to Ukraine. As a result, Ukrainian children with autism will receive medically necessary, trauma-informed services to quantifiably decrease debilitating effects of war-related trauma. Parents will learn research-based strategies to support their autistic children’s mental health and development. These outcomes have public health implications for decreasing future care needs both for parents and their children.



Ukrainian children use donated laptops for online therapy.

We are grateful for the many contributions donated through the Pavlo Gintov and Lake Country Aid Concert fundraisers. Newsletter designed, written and compiled by Yasmina Berkat in collaboration with Drs. Poznansky, Hart, 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.

Donate

Thank you for considering a donation.

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