

Heal Ukraine Group

January 2023 Newsletter



In Collaboration
with:



As the 11th month of the brutal Russian war comes to a close, the lives of millions of Ukrainians remain at risk, exacerbated by the country's healthcare system being under siege as well as harsh and bitter winter conditions persisting without stable access to electricity, heat, and water. Per the World Health Organization, Russian attacks have targeted more than 700 healthcare structures and facilities. The pressure mounts for Ukrainian medical practitioners to overcome ongoing, unimaginable challenges in order to provide essential healthcare services to the people of Ukraine. Despite the untenable circumstances, it remains critical that healthcare is systemically available to the people of Ukraine, even in the circumstances of the war.

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 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 (www.lakecountryaid.org), 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.

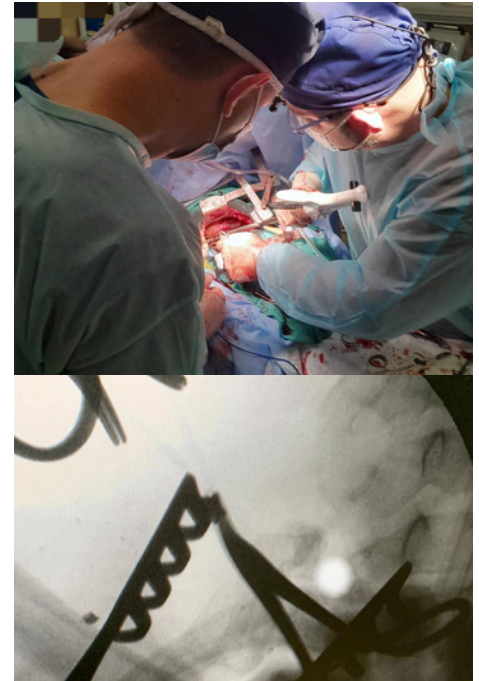
Please join us in support of Ukraine as the country faces a growing healthcare crisis.

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.



Medical Supplies to the Frontlines

The war has increased the need for healthcare while effectively reducing the system's ability to provide these essential services, particularly in areas of active conflict. To support Ukraine, HUG continues to procure and deliver specifically requested medical supplies to our Ukrainian colleagues on the frontlines. Through collaboration with grassroots NGOs, GMKA, and LCMAU, patient warming systems were delivered to several field hospitals in Eastern Ukraine. These electrically heated mattresses maintain a stable temperature environment for a patient on the operating table, largely improving the positive outcome of surgical procedures. Over 17 devices with mattresses and blankets were delivered, and more are being requested by the frontline surgeons, emphasizing the necessity of the devices, especially under the current winter conditions combined with unstable power supply settings. Additionally, Mizuho 20 MHz surgical doppler probes were delivered to a neurosurgery hospital in Kyiv. These devices offer a portable, easy-to-use, and accurate modality for evaluating blood flow intraoperatively, with no need for invasive angiograms. The device went to immediate use to remove a fragment from a patient's neck. Physicians at the hospital commented on the neurosurgical instruments: "Thank you so much for the tools we received! In fact, such items make it possible to perform surgical interventions atraumatically and accurately. The tools were distributed among the departments of the hospital that were short in supply. Thank you!"



Insight to a Ukrainian Scholar of the Medical SAR program

Through an initiative spearheaded by the Harvard Scholars at Risk (SAR) program, GMKA, and HUG, the joint program termed Medical Scholars at Risk provides Ukrainian medical practitioners with up to six months of specialized training at a Harvard affiliated hospital. The overarching objective of the Medical SAR program is to not only sustain healthcare access in Ukraine during this time of war but to improve the country's healthcare and delivery long-term. Invited scholars focus on a specific area of training that addresses an underrepresented skill/technique in the visiting scholar's particular field, medical approach that has long-term benefits to enhanced patient outcome and care, or training of a subspecialty disrupted by Russia's unprovoked invasion.

Anesthesiologist Dariia S. became the first Ukrainian physician to join the US-based Medical SAR program. In applying to participate, Dariia's primary objective emphasized the need to learn, and subsequently disseminate, ability to perform regional anesthesia, specifically nerve blocks, a skill that will greatly contribute to the positive management of war wounds in Ukraine. "My hospital, before the war, nobody did nerve blocks. Sometimes we take care of wounded soldiers, with a simple method of anesthesia, very cheap and not complicated." Dariia says. "[Now] I can study here and bring this knowledge to my colleagues." Outside of her hospital-based role, Dariia shares medical information with other clinicians on an educational platform called "Progress" that she founded with a classmate while in university. She organizes educational events for Ukrainian doctors, including seminars, conferences, and master classes, and also shares evidence-based resources on medicine, including translations of American and European guidelines and protocols. "We are one of the biggest providers of post-graduate [medical] education in Ukraine...it is the maximum I can do for Ukrainian doctors, just to spread this information, and spread through my platform." After two weeks with the block team at Brigham and Women's hospital, Dariia enrolled in a Disaster medicine training course at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), Harvard Medical School, developing a variety of skills in aspects of Disaster Medicine, including mass casualty care, emergency medical services (EMS) disaster operations, and humanitarian crisis response. Dariia looks forward to implementing what she has learned during her observership back in Ukraine and to disseminate the teaching of skills and knowledge with her colleagues, medical trainees, and followers of her Progress platform.



Dr. Dariia S. developing a range of skills in Disaster Medicine at BIDMC through Harvard Medical School.



Autism Unity's "Colors of Peace" Charitable Art Exhibit

Art is a universal language and a great avenue to understanding the lives and perspectives of others, including in the context of the Ukrainian war and accompanying hope and prayers for peace. For the first time, from December 17th to December 18th, 2022, Autism Unity, the 501(c)(3) non-profit, organized the charitable art exhibition “Colors of Peace”, featuring paintings by local and Ukrainian artists, including newly emerging talents with autism. Due to the war, many of the children in Ukraine were forced to leave everything behind: their homes, their schools, and often, their family members. Among these children are the most vulnerable – those with special needs and developmental disabilities. The trauma of the war and the loss of educational and therapeutic support are catastrophic to people with autism, resulting in a mental health crisis for entire families and communities. In collaboration with HUG; AANE Artist Collaborative, Boston MA (The Asperger/Autism Network); the United Hearts Center, Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine; the Children With A Future, Kyiv, Ukraine; the Association of Parents of Children with Autism, Kyiv, Ukraine, Autism Unity has raised and continues to procure funds for medically necessary, trauma-informed services provided to children with autism and their parents. Already, Autism Unity has sent 70 laptops, 30 in-hand and 40 in progress to connect families electronically with centers for autism. Special thank you to Analog Devices Inc and Vince Roche, CEO, for the generous donations that have supported our efforts to Ukraine.

Dmitriy Dribinskiy, the founder of Autism Unity, shares below the success of the “Colors of Peace” charitable art exhibit:

"The exhibit was a great success. With your help and support we've managed to deliver our call for peace to several hundred visitors, who have purchased different artwork (paintings, prints, jewelry, etc.) totaling over \$15,000! We will continue collecting, refurbishing, and shipping laptops to Ukrainian families and specialists in need; remotely connecting displaced families of kids who have autism with therapeutic specialists; building a secure and friendly Telehealth platform for long-term usage by families and specialists; providing centers and individual specialists in Ukraine with training and resources needed for the therapeutic support of children who have autism and their families; and raising awareness of the catastrophic consequences of war for differently abled people. All profit from this event will be used by Autism Unity to continue supporting children with autism of Ukraine and their families. Even more, through additional donations, Autism Unity is providing rehabilitation camp for kids with autism and their families – 12 families, 15 kids, with 2 specialists. The camp is run through a trusted center in Ukraine that also made handmade dolls for the exhibit (<https://www.facebook.com/Autizm.KR>)." In a behind-the-scenes glimpse, we revealed our findings about these paintings and the artists who made them. One of them is Max Brovchenko, a 11-year old boy with autism from the city of Berdyansk, Ukraine. He paints incredible pictures centered on the theme of space and writes a fantastic book about Planet A. The media has already called Max “the little Ukrainian Picasso” and we were happy to share his work at the exhibit.



Colors of Peace charitable art exhibit and showcase from December.



Pictured to the left are the families participating in the rehabilitation camp in Ukraine, an effort possible through donations from the Colors of Peace exhibit.



Please join us **February 10th, 12pm to 1pm** at the **panel event of visiting Ukrainian scholars of the Medical Scholars-at-Risk program**. The event is both in person **at the O'Keefe auditorium at Mass General Hospital or online via zoom**. Panelists will discuss work in healthcare in Ukraine, the needs of the country's healthcare system and ongoing challenges.

Zoom link: <https://partners.zoom.us/j/81008504861?pwd=enhNWGxkWVlySGp4bXNhcFdXa3d6QT09>

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.

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

Thank you for considering a donation:



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