

This issue of the **Public Health Program (PHP)** e-Newsletter highlights our work during the months of December 2006, and January and February 2007, with upcoming events in March and April. We encourage information sharing to explore potential linkages and receive feedback. Suggestions and input are welcome. Contact Ellen Liu at eliu@sorosny.org. Please visit the PHP website at www.soros.org/health

Advocacy on Our Issues:

Public Health Watch Partners Advocate for an Urgent Response to TB and HIV

“Demand for Action on TB and HIV,” a collective call for an urgent response to the joint epidemics of TB and HIV, was drafted and signed by 43 international advocates, researchers, and people living with TB and HIV in Glen Cove, New York on March 7. The declaration, a collaborative effort among all of the participants attending the Public Health Watch Partners’ Meeting from March 5 to 7, will be submitted to the WHO, UNAIDS, and other policymaking bodies, and will advocate for urgent action to address the TB and HIV epidemics. Public Health Watch convened a partners’ meeting as a way to review and share lessons in community-led monitoring and advocacy, strengthen support to community advocates, and catalyze collaborations among TB and HIV advocates. Featured speakers included Jim Kim, MD, of Brigham and Women’s Hospital and director of the Francois Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University, and Alasdair Reid, HIV/TB adviser for UNAIDS. Contact: Helena Choi, hchoi@sorosny.org.

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and IHRD Critique International Narcotic Control Board

On February 27, Stephen Lewis, former United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, joined Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and the International Harm Reduction Development Program in a press conference to launch *Closed to Reason: The International Narcotics Control Board and HIV/AIDS*. The new report details the ways in which the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), ostensibly independent but funded and staffed by the UN, has blocked effective HIV prevention for injecting drug users. The document highlights factual errors and omissions in INCB publications and statements, the ways in which the board has ignored expert legal counsel and scientific evidence, and the need for greater accountability and transparency at the INCB. The full report is available at www.soros.org/harm-reduction. Contact: Sophie Pinkham, spinkham@sorosny.org

Confronting a Hidden Disease: TB in Roma Communities

In January, the Roma Health Project, in collaboration with the World Lung Foundation, released *Confronting a Hidden Disease: TB in Roma Communities*, a report highlighting research needs and program opportunities for national TB programs, ministries of health, social affairs, or minority integration, international agencies, and NGOs. The report outlines the available literature and data on Roma and TB in Central and Eastern Europe, and current efforts by governments and NGOs to address TB in Roma communities. The full report is available on the Roma Health Project website: www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/roma Contact: Heather Doyle, hdoyle@sorosny.org.

Leveraging Civil Society Engagement in the Global Fund Board

In January, representatives from the three Global Fund NGO delegations, the Global Fund secretariat, OSI, and experts on civil society involvement gathered in Amsterdam to draft recommendations on

leveraging civil society engagement with the Global Fund. The six strategic recommendations developed include: supporting the submission of non-country coordinating mechanism proposals by socially marginalized groups, increasing the representation of vulnerable groups on country coordinating mechanisms, promoting dual track financing of Global Fund grants to government and civil society principal recipients, and strengthening community participation within Global Fund structures. The recommendations were submitted to the Global Fund Board's Policy and Strategy Committee to be considered for inclusion in the Global Fund's four-year strategy. Contact: Shannon Kowalski-Morton, skowalski@sorosny.org

International Palliative Care Initiative's Advocacy Efforts Highlighted

At the annual meeting of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Care held February 14 to 17 in Salt Lake City, International Palliative Care Initiative's partners and grantees highlighted the initiative's advocacy efforts at a session on international palliative care development. Panelists spoke about the efforts of International Pain Policy Fellows working to improve the availability of pain medications and palliative care in their countries, ongoing advocacy to develop a WHO essential drug list for palliative care, and the integration of palliative care into cancer centers in Jordan. Contact: Kiera Hepford, khepford@sorosny.org

Encouraging Developments in Palliative Care in Two Russian Cities

In February, at the invitation of the American International Health Alliance, the International Palliative Care Initiative led two stakeholders meetings on palliative care development for AIDS patients in Russia. Representatives from the government, NGOs, faith-based organizations, and palliative care professionals convened at regional AIDS centers in Orenburg and St. Petersburg to discuss the state of the HIV epidemic and palliative care. Russian health officials and health care professionals have begun to acknowledge the need for pain management and end-of-life care for AIDS patients and expressed interest in future collaborative work. Given the current state of the HIV epidemic in Russia, enormous challenges exist, including lack of health care staff, the need for professional education and training in palliative care, and technical assistance on developing service delivery programs for AIDS patients, especially home care programs. Contact: Mary Callaway, mcallaway@sorosny.org

Joint Initiatives:

LAHI and IHRD to Convene Lawyers Who Defend People Who Use Drugs

In May, the Law and Health Initiative and the International Harm Reduction Development Program will bring together 50 lawyers from Eastern European and former Soviet Union countries who provide criminal and civil legal defense to people using drugs. Legal aid has the potential to yield positive health effects for drug users by addressing human rights violations that increase disease vulnerability such as police violence, discrimination, and abuses in the health system. Coinciding with the International Conference on the Reduction of Drug-Related Harm in Warsaw, the meeting will offer practitioners from 12 countries the opportunity to share experiences, address difficult cases, and strategize on increasing lawyers' involvement in the defense of drug users. Contact: Jonathan Cohen, jcohen@sorosny.org

Capacity Building:

IHRD Supports Community Organizing Around Ukrainian Harm Reduction Conference

Representatives of more than a dozen organizations of people who use drugs and people living with HIV will finalize a joint 2007 national advocacy campaign plan at an International Harm Reduction Development Program-supported "Community Forum" just prior to the Ukrainian Harm Reduction Conference in Kyiv (March 20-24). The advocacy campaign will be supported

by IHRD in collaboration with the International Renaissance Foundation–Kyiv. In addition, IHRD will support a series of “Community Club” events to provide opportunities for training, networking and planning during the conference. Contact: Matt Curtis, mcurtis@sorosny.org

Roma Women Contribute to Developing Strategy on Roma Women’s Health

Roma women activists from Central and Eastern Europe, together with National Foundation representatives from Slovakia and Macedonia, met with staff from the OSI Roma Health Project and Roma Participation Program to discuss strategies for improving Roma women’s health. The one-day meeting in Budapest focused on shared relevant experiences and identified key issues and action items for promoting Roma civil society engagement. Capacity building, policy development, communication and advocacy are among the key areas for development among Roma women’s health organizations. Contact: Heather Doyle, hdoyle@sorosny.org.

Strengthening Engagement of Women and Girls with the Global Fund in Southern Africa

The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa and the OSI Public Health Program are jointly issuing a call for proposals to strengthen engagement with the Global Fund by organizations led by and representing women and girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Grants will support coalitions of women’s rights and HIV NGOs in these countries to: develop proposals for submission to the Global Fund addressing vulnerabilities of women and girls (particularly young women, sex workers, women living in rural areas, women from certain ethnic groups); build capacity to engage the Global Fund processes at the country level; and to advocate for increases in the flow of Global Fund resources to projects that meet women’s and girls’ needs. More information and proposal guidelines are available in English and French at: http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/news/globalfund_2070307
Contact: Shannon Kowalski-Morton, skowalski@sorosny.org

First Law and Health Salzburg Seminar Fosters Development of Law and Health Curricula

University professors, lawyers, and patients’ rights representatives from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine participated in the first annual Law and Health Salzburg Seminar, "Topics in Human Rights in Patient Care" held February 11 to 17. Participants examined various aspects of health law, with the aim of developing a curricula on Law and Health to implement in their home countries. Course instructors included Jonathan Cohen and Tamar Ezer from the OSI Public Health Program’s Law and Health Initiative, Scott Newton of the University of London, and Judy Overall of Medical Knowledge Institute. The Open Society Justice Initiative’s Mariana Berbec and Veronika Kristkova led participants through a practical workshop on "Interdisciplinary Curriculum Design," which will result in draft curricula proposals to be considered by OSI and national foundations for funding. Contact: Tamar Ezer, tezer@sorosny.org

First Antiretroviral Treatment for Vulnerable Populations Seminar Held in Salzburg

Doctors and public health advocates from Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the former Soviet Union, and Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and China attended the first “ARV Treatment for Vulnerable Populations” seminar held in Salzburg from February 25 to March 3. The seminar represented an important opportunity for the International Harm Reduction Development Program to provide training in delivering HIV treatment and care to people who use drugs. Course directors included: Jay F. Dobkin, MD, and Karen F. Brudney, MD of Columbia University Medical Center, Michel Kazatchkine, MD, France’s HIV/AIDS and Communicable Diseases Ambassador, and Kasia Malinowska-Sempruch, program director of IHRD at OSI. Contact: Eva Foldes, efoldes@osi.hu

Grant Competition in Thailand to Build Capacity on Sexual Health and Rights

In an effort to build capacity and sustainability of sexual health and rights work among Thai civil society, the Sexual Health and Rights Project issued a call for proposals to locally-based organizations in Thailand to expand work on sexual health and rights. Three grants of \$30,000 each will support organizations with a demonstrated history or clear intention of advocating for the health and rights of sex workers and/or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons. The grants will emphasize migrant populations and focus especially on HIV/AIDS and human rights. Preference will be given to organizations that have leadership from sex workers, LGBT persons, and migrant communities. Contact: Sue Simon, ssimon@sorosny.org

Other News and Announcements:

George Soros Announces OSI's \$3 Million Grant for New TB/HIV Initiative in Africa

At an audio press conference held March 14, George Soros announced OSI's \$3 million, two-year grant to Partners In Health's project in Lesotho to develop standardized guidelines for treatment of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) or extremely drug-resistant TB among people living with HIV/AIDS. This will be the first set of international guidelines to address MDR-TB among people who are HIV-positive. During the audio press conference, Soros emphasized the importance of community involvement and scale-up of basic TB control. The press conference also featured Paul Farmer, MD, and Jim Kim, MD, both of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard University, and cofounders of Partners In Health. The conference was moderated by Joanne Carter, associate executive director of RESULTS Educational Fund. Media reporting of the announcement included coverage by Reuters, BBC World News, the Boston Globe, AP, Fox News, and United Press International, among others. Contact: Emily Bell, ebell@sorosny.org

SHARP Supports Assessment of Grantmaking for LGBT Rights in the Global East and South

With financial and technical support of the Sexual Health and Rights Project and other donors, Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues is mapping the landscape of grantmaking for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) rights in the Global South and East in order to identify the funding gaps, future strategies, and opportunities for LGBT rights funding. LGBT rights funders met in March in Amsterdam to discuss these possibilities. Meeting materials will be available on the SHARP website: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/sharp>. Contact: Sue Simon, ssimon@sorosny.org

Upcoming Events:

Advancing Global Advocacy on Sex Workers Health and Human Rights

Sex worker health and human rights advocates from around the world will convene April 2 to 4 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to address human rights abuses committed "in the name of assisting sex workers." A major focus will be on developing sex worker-led advocacy and media campaigns on the most controversial sex worker health and rights issues such as 100 percent condom use programs, raid and rescue interventions, and end-demand legislation. Additional goals include strengthening global sex worker networks' advocacy impact through information sharing tools, enhancing sex workers' ability to rapidly respond to antirights policies, and increasing the voice and leadership of sex workers in policies affecting their health and rights. Contact: Rachel Thomas, rthomas@sorosny.org

Medical-Legal Partnerships: From the United States to Abroad

On April 5, the Law and Health Initiative and US Programs will host Barry Zuckerman, MD, founder of the Medical Legal Partnership for Children, and staff from medical-legal partnerships in Boston and New York at the OSI New York office. Medical-legal partnerships are an

innovative service model that pairs attorneys with health clinics to address the legal needs of patients. Legal services can improve patients' overall quality of life whether by helping a person with terminal cancer write a will, helping an asthmatic child move to a mold-free apartment, or helping an immigrant claim health insurance. This medical-legal partnership model has relevant implications for OSI's work with vulnerable populations around the world. Contact: Jonathan Cohen, jcohen@sorosny.org.

Equal Partners: Health and Human Rights 2007

The Public Health Program's annual partners' meeting, "Equal Partners: Health and Human Rights 2007," will take place in Cape Town, South Africa, from June 3 to 8. This year, the meeting will bring staff from OSI's Public Health and Rule of Law programs together with OSI senior management and staff from Soros foundations and OSI offices. A three-day health and human rights training is planned and will cover numerous emerging issues in health and human rights. Participants will also be making site visits to prominent South Africa-based NGOs working on current issues related to OSI's work. The meeting will provide an important opportunity to discuss and catalyze collaborations between the Rule of Law and Public Health programs, as well as across the OSI Network. This meeting is by invitation only. Contact: Ellen Liu, eliu@sorosny.org