

Los Angeles-St. Petersburg Sister City Committee Medical Project – April 2002

“The Russian Disease” describes the current plight of children and adults dying prematurely from preventable causes. Awareness of this medical catastrophe led to the active collaboration of a doctor-to-doctor initiative between Russian medical leaders and Western experts. Starting in 1995, during a University of Southern California School of Medicine sponsored Visiting Professorship to a southern Russian city; the goal to help change medical care became a commitment for Dr. Lieberman. The Los Angeles-St. Petersburg Sister City Committee endorsed the project from its inception. From 1995- 2001 the number of involved doctors from Russia and the West has continually expanded. The project to date has been modestly funded by contributions from private donors, private foundations and an international agency. A special benefit was held on November 18, 2001 to help defray expenses.

During these years, more than 20 Western experts have traveled throughout Russia and interacted with physicians from all parts of the country. These contacts include lectures, hospital and clinic visits, one on one consultation and group discussions. Most importantly, ongoing communications are maintained . The effort has created trust among participating Russian and Western physicians, has provided insights into the magnitude of needs and set the stage for the next phase for a unique pilot project in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The mission is to educate physicians and, to provide ongoing education to practitioners throughout the country. Learning the latest information, disseminating it and exploiting opportunities for multiplier effects is the most expedient strategy to change clinical care.

The project stands on the threshold of meeting this challenge by provision of:

- 1) Up-to-date clinical information**
- 2) Creation and maintenance of web sites- with state of the art clinical guidelines adapted to Russia and in Russian**
- 3) Electronic linkages among widely dispersed Russian practitioners**
- 4) Identification and commitment from Western leaders to serve as ongoing mentors**

Specific required steps now needed are:

- Collection, adaptation and translation of Western materials into Russian**
- Creation & maintenance of web sites ; involvement of Russian physicians**
- Electronic linkages for utilization by identified local leaders**
- Physician exchanges between Russia and the West: bilateral**
- Travel grants for junior Russian faculty members and practitioners to attend International meetings held in Russia**