



Steven E. Weinberger, MD, FACP
Executive Vice President and
Chief Executive Officer

Phone: 215-351-2800, Fax: 215-351-2829
Email: sweinberger@acponline.org

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Charles North
Mission Director
USAID – Department of State
5430 Moscow Place
Washington, DC 20521

Dear Mr. North,

We are writing to ask for your support to retain USAID funding for the Eurasian Medical Education Program, under the direction of Dr. Edward Burger and sponsored by the American College of Physicians. This program was recently notified that its funding from the USAID Moscow Mission is being discontinued the next fiscal year due to budgetary constraints.

We understand the challenge of making difficult financial decisions in these serious economic times. Such decisions call for prudent evaluation of currently funded programs with an eye toward retaining those with the best track record for producing positive results in the most cost effective manner. We believe the Eurasian Medical Education Program clearly falls into this category. Over its 14-year history:

- The program has been eminently successful in raising the level of physician practice and, ultimately, health.
- The program has interacted with over 10,000 Russian practitioners in academic medical centers and postgraduate medical institutions in 12 regions of the Russian Federation.
- The program has brought 13 groups of physicians and Russian health leaders to centers in the US.
- The program has been outstanding in recruiting from among the most highly recognized medical talent who have been willing to return to Russian centers repeatedly on a voluntary basis.
- Recognition of this by our Russian colleagues and the medical leadership has resulted in very strong and long-lasting associations and professional respect.

The EMEP has brought great credit to US foreign policy efforts and it stands as a prime example of medical diplomacy and smart power. We believe that abrupt interruption of the program is likely to reverse the record of professional cooperation so carefully developed.

There remain significant but reversible challenges of serious disease and premature mortality including HIV/AIDS, TB and non-communicable disease in Russia. To discontinue the EMEP at this time will put an end to the remarkable progress the program has achieved in advancing health and medical diplomacy. The funding sought for this program is \$450,000, a relatively small amount when considering its history of positive results and cost effective delivery of medical education to Russian health care providers.

We strongly encourage your support to retain USAID's funding for the Eurasian Medical Education Program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steven Weinberger, MD, FACP
Executive Vice President and CEO