

Heal Ukraine Group

November 2022 Newsletter



After more than eight and a half months of living under Russian occupation, residents of Kherson return to the streets to celebrate the city's recent liberation. There is a makeshift carnival with decorations of yellow and blue and singing of patriotic songs as residents share this moment of celebration. But relief and joy are short-lived as reality settles for what may be the harshest winter since the second world war. Before retreating, Russians destroyed energy facilities and civilian infrastructure, leaving the city without running water, electricity or heating. This unlawful measure is one of many war crimes that has been repeated by Russian forces in an apparent effort to damage Ukraine's energy grid.

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 worked with its supporters in Boston and with Lake Country Medical Aid to Ukraine (www.lakecountryaid.org), a non-profit organization in Georgia, to raise significant funds to support these efforts.

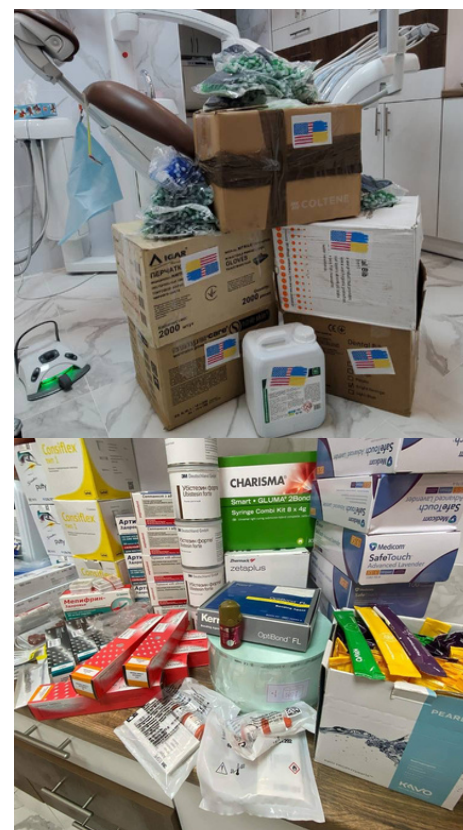
Our work, detailed below could not have been completed without the full and generous support of philanthropy.

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.

Dental Consumable Supplies Delivered in Lviv

Over the past month, the HUG team continued to provide needed medical supplies and equipment to our Ukrainian colleagues. Recent achievements include the successful delivery of a variety of dental consumable supplies to Savochka Dental Clinic in Lviv. Due to wartime conditions, hygienic needs are overlooked. Inexpensive toothpaste and toothbrushes are repeatedly misplaced as soldiers continue their evasion of Russian attacks and shelling. Even when stationed, water is saved for hydration, leaving little to spare for showering or brushing teeth. Dental infections are on the rise. Soldiers, some who may have been in the middle of dental treatment when the war abruptly began, fight with exposed nerves, gingivitis, or general dental pain, only eased by dwindling supplies of painkillers. On the first of this month, the dental clinic team expressed their gratitude to HUG and collaborating partners, GMKA and Lake Country Medical Aid for Ukraine, for the delivery of these supplies. These dental consumables included products like prosthetics, crowns, dental impression materials, implants, and similar supplies. Through the provision of such materials, the clinic is able to perform a host of therapeutic, endodontic, and orthodontic procedures to repair dental disorders including dental caries, impairments, misalignments, and periodontal disease -- all at no cost to Ukrainian soldiers.





Coming to a Close: Personal Reflections from a Host and Ukrainian Clinician as the Transplant Observership at MGH Reaches its Final Month

By Dr. Jacki Hart

Since the full-scale invasion of Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine, we have witnessed the worst of humanity. The antidote to this senseless cruelty is reflected in ongoing learning, betterment of lives, and, frankly, love and kindness offered by others, who began as strangers but became integrally connected. A key example of the melding of such qualities is the MGH transplant program spearheaded by HUG and GMKA's Serguei Melnitchouk, MD, Ukrainian-American cardiovascular surgeon from MGH. The initiative took a village, as they say, and involved efforts from multiple entities in the U.S. and Ukraine working together, including HUG, GMKA, MGH, the Ukraine Ministry of Health (MOH), Ukraine Medical Outreach, the Christian Medical Association (CMA) of Ukraine, and volunteer hosts throughout the Boston area who stepped up with many questions but with zero hesitation to open their hearts and their homes to visiting clinicians from Ukraine.

Here are two stories – one from a host and one from a clinician – that reflect the BEST of humanity:

For the past many weeks, I have had the honor and privilege of hosting doctors (three in the first week and one for the full duration) from Ukraine. It was charting new territory for me (and my husband). I knew little about Ukraine and what to expect from my guests. I felt strongly about helping the Ukrainian effort due to my own background as a child of Holocaust survivors. The timing of their arrival was far from optimal -- during the Jewish high holidays, which is the most stressful time of year for me as a synagogue administrator. In addition, my husband had to fly to California to support an ill family member. Despite these challenges, the experience was invaluable.

It took some time for friendships to forge. Each morning I would ask the doctors to update me on what was new in Ukraine, and they would fill me in on what they were hearing from home. We talked of the war, about their families and experiences at MGH, and of the beauty of the New England fall. When missiles started to land in Kyiv, all our thoughts turned East. It felt as if my own family was being impacted. Due to the escalating situation in Ukraine, our remaining guest doctor decided to return home earlier than planned. It was a difficult decision, but he needed to support his family, his hospital, and his country.

His departure left a void. He said that Americans were too emotional, but the truth is all of us felt sad watching Andrii get on his plane. During this brief time, we shared so much with one another. I continue to watch the news from Ukraine. I continue to worry about the people and the country. Like our guest doctor, I continue to try to make sense of it all. We hope the future will include a reunion in a free and united Ukraine. – Linda Singer-Berk

My name is Svitlana G. As a Ukrainian pulmonologist. I am part of a team of 13 doctors who came to Boston in the beginning of October 2022 for training in lung transplantation. I want to express my deep gratitude to everyone who helped make this event a reality. We were warmly received and taken care of. Our hosts did their best to make our stay in Boston and study at MGH as comfortable and productive as possible. Thank you, Serguei, Nelya, Jacki, Brian, Katharine, Aliza, Jim, Jimmy, and Syndi and many, many others! This was an amazing opportunity for us. Our team is incredibly excited about the development of transplantation in Ukraine. Despite the brutal war, it is as important as ever for us to not just survive but move forward, continue to live, study, and adopt new ways of helping our patients. Thanks to all those who support us, our Ukrainian spirit and faith which cannot be broken.

Glory to Ukraine! -Svitlana G



The visiting doctors find a window of time to explore Boston



Ukrainian Transplant Team with Dr. Serguei Melnitchouk (right) in the operating room



Dr. Hart shares remarks with the Ukrainian Transplant Team and their Hosts at a social gathering



Expanding HUG Efforts to Deliver Supplies Across Ukraine

Ongoing efforts coordinated by the HUG team involve the procurement of medical supplies requested by a number of medical facilities across Ukraine. Two critical pieces of equipment that we successfully secured and delivered to the Donbas Frontline Hospital include a lung ventilator and a heart monitor. The lifesaving gear was put to immediate use, supporting a desperately needed third bed to care for gravely wounded soldiers. Without the monitor, in particular, diagnosing clinical deterioration, indicated through subtle changes in patients' vital signs, is delayed and consequently hinders timely medical intervention to improve patient outcomes. By installing and implementing these devices, vital signs are continuously monitored, allowing for early identification of worrisome, even acute, changes, which allows healthcare workers to intervene in advance of potential adverse events. Additional materials delivered include six magnifying loupes that went to Dnipro. A physician at that hospital commented: *"Got binocular loupes. Thank you very much. With the ever-present threat of a power outage, when there may be no light during the operation, these illuminated magnifying loupes will greatly help our surgeons. We have already distributed them to the departments, and our surgeons are already starting to use them."* By the end of November, more surgical instruments and supplies are due to arrive at their final destinations including 140 sutures, an orthopedic bone drill, two Butterfly portable ultrasounds, and 70 more first aid kits, all proudly carried by members of the Ukrainian transplant team who left Boston this month to return home to Ukraine. These efforts are supported through the generous donations of the Georgia Fundraiser and facilitated by Lake Country Aid in partnership with GMKA, HTWB, and HUG. Collectively, these NGO collaboratives continue to fulfill requests that come directly from our Ukrainian colleagues.



Please Join Us at the **Colors of Peace** Art Exhibit hosted by AutismUnity
At **Wedeman Gallery of Lasell University**, Saturday, December 17th and Sunday, December 18th 12-5pm for a charitable art showcase and sale in support of Ukrainian children with autism.

Save the Date: HUG and GMKA are hosting a Brunch Gala Art Auction from 11am-3pm at the Restaurant 53 West and 53rd st. NYC. on December 17th.

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.

Follow us on social media for more updates on our efforts for Ukraine:



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In Collaboration with:

