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RUSSIAN & AMERICAN LEADERS TO MEET TO SHARE EXPERTISE IN ADDRESSING TRAUMA AND POST-WAR RECOVERY

Worcester, Mass. — Five Russian leaders participating in the Open World Program will spend December 14-22, 2007 in the Worcester area at the University of Massachusetts Medical School; UMass Memorial Medical Center and the Veterans Administration New England Health Care System (network 1) affiliated facilities to examine **Trauma and Post-War Recovery: Preventing and promoting recovery from PTSD and Addiction.**

This international exchange is supported by the U.S. Library of Congress in an effort to bring together both U.S. and Russian scientists to exchange information about successful interventions and to consider future collaborative projects. Overall the project is managed by the independent Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress. Open World enables emerging political and civic leaders from participating countries to work with their U.S. counterparts and experience American-style democracy and free enterprise at the local level. Douglas Ziedonis, MD, MPH, professor and chair of psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and UMass Memorial Medical Center, is the local leader for the event for Open World.

While in Worcester, the delegates will meet with clinicians, researchers, and educators whose work focuses on trauma, addiction and recovery. They will also have the opportunity to visit facilities affiliated with the University of Massachusetts Medical School and UMass Memorial Medical Center and the Veterans Administration New England Health Care System (network 1) who are providing care and doing research in the area of trauma and addiction. The intent of the delegation is for the scientists from Russia and the U.S. to come together to learn from one another about the care for veterans of war who suffer from trauma and addiction and to commence an international collaboration to enhance the clinical career, training and research opportunities in trauma and recovery.

The visiting delegates are **Irina Ramonova** from Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia in Russia, who works as a Consulting Psychologist at the Republican Center for Medical, Social, and Psychological Assistance; the Center provides psychological and social rehabilitation of patients in crisis conditions; **Larisa Aylarova**, a Consultant Psychologist also from Vladikavkaz, who provides psychological consultation in person and by phone and does psychotherapy groups; **Larisa Geydenrikh** from Rostov-On-Don, Rostov Oblast, in Russia who works as a psychologist in the Regional Center for Diagnostics and Consulting, which provides help for students in crisis situations; and **Tatyana Fattakhova** also from Rostov-on-Don, who is chief psychologist at the Center for Psychological Aid and Rehabilitation in the North Caucasus Military District. Dr. Fattakhova organized a program of training for military psychologists on PTSD, and is interested in seeing how public / private partnerships work in the United States. **Vasilyevich Buzhinskiy**, chair of EFL Methodology at Kursk State University in Kursk, Russia, accompanies them as a facilitator.

In host communities, the Open World delegation is scheduled to meet with leaders, faculty and staff from the University of Massachusetts Medical School and UMass Memorial Health Care and New England Veterans Administration Health Care System to tour area clinical services and research facilities as well as affiliate programs.

"It's an honor for UMass Medical School and UMass Memorial Medical Center to be a part of this educational collaboration," said Terence R. Flotte, MD, Dean of the School of Medicine. "International partnerships such as this one benefit not just the immediate participants, but medical education and treatment worldwide. We hope this is just the beginning of a long-term exchange."

Home stays will allow the Open World delegates to experience American family life. They will also take part in several cultural and community activities, including an area tour with Preservation Worcester, and visits to Higgins Armory in Worcester; Harvard Square in Cambridge; and Fanueil Hall and Government Center in Boston.

The Open World Leadership Center has awarded a grant to the National Peace Foundation to administer this and similar exchanges held in 2007.

The Open World Program is a unique, nonpartisan initiative of the U.S. Congress that builds mutual understanding between the emerging leaders of participating countries and their U.S. counterparts. It also exposes delegates to ideas and practices they can adapt for use in their own work. Founded in 1999 with a focus on Russia, the program has also in recent years hosted delegations from Lithuania, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Delegates range from mayors to journalists, from nonprofit directors to small-business owners, and from political activists to high-court judges. More than 10,500 Open World participants have been

hosted in all 50 U.S. states. The program's administering agency, the Open World Leadership Center, is a legislative branch entity with offices at the Library of Congress.

For more information, please contact Dr. Ziedonis at 508-856-3066 or George Felcyn at 202-466-6210. For more information on Open World, please visit <http://www.openworld.gov>.

About the University of Massachusetts Medical School

The University of Massachusetts Medical School, one of the fastest growing academic health centers in the country, has built a reputation as a world-class research institution, consistently producing noteworthy advances in clinical and basic research. The Medical School attracts more than \$176 million in research funding annually, 80 percent of which comes from federal funding sources. The work of UMMS researcher Craig Mello, PhD, an investigator of the prestigious Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), and his colleague Andrew Fire, PhD, then of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, toward the discovery of RNA interference was awarded the 2006 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, hailed as the "Breakthrough of the Year" in 2002 by the journal *Science* and has spawned a new and promising field of research, the global impact of which may prove astounding. UMMS is the academic partner of UMass Memorial Health Care, the largest health care provider in Central Massachusetts. For more information, visit www.umassmed.edu.

About UMass Memorial Health Care

UMass Memorial Health Care is Central Massachusetts' largest not-for-profit health care delivery system, with 1,700 physicians and over 10,000 employees. Its comprehensive network of care includes teaching hospitals, affiliated community hospitals, freestanding primary care practices, ambulatory outpatient clinics, long-term care facilities, home health agencies, hospice programs, a rehabilitation group and mental health services. UMass Memorial Medical Center is a three-campus acute care hospital comprised of the University, Memorial and Hahnemann campuses. UMass Memorial Health Care is the clinical partner of the University of Massachusetts Medical School. For additional information, go to www.umassmemorial.org.