



Program Summary:

CitiHope International has delivered aid to Belarus since 1990 and has partnered in Operation Provide Hope, a U.S. Department of State humanitarian program, since 1995. The OPH program goal of relieving suffering of isolated populations throughout Eurasia is accomplished by improving access and availability of pharmaceuticals to needy patients and by increasing capacity of local medical institutions to provide quality medical service.

In 2007 **\$5,316,069.00** in donated pharmaceuticals and medical supplies was distributed to medical institutions throughout the country, treating more than **32,500** patients. Medicine distribution per healthcare level was as follows: primary level -- **45** medical institutions; secondary level – **15** medical institutions and tertiary level – **3** medical institutions

Current Health Situation in Belarus:

The health and well-being of the population in Belarus is very poor because of a combination of factors such as poverty, poor diet and living conditions during this transitional period following collapse of the Soviet Union. Life style factors such as tobacco and alcohol use also contribute to poor health. Life expectancy is low, not only in comparison with Western Europe and North America, but also compared to a number of developing countries.

These factors are also impacted by consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident, an obstacle to economic development, a source of environmental and food contamination, and a reason for the health and social crisis.

While the Chernobyl disaster occurred in 1986 many health-related complications are only now appearing. A well-recorded increase in child and adolescent thyroid cancer poses a major problem for health services and is directly linked with health aftermaths of the accident. Previous experience of the thyroid gland irradiation indicates that exposure-related cases will continue to occur for at least 50 years following the disaster. While the disease is not generally fatal, the treatment is expensive and resource-demanding.

Access to appropriate modern medicines is an almost universal problem in most medical institutions throughout the country, including hospitals in Chernobyl-affected territories. For several categories of patients (pensioners, families with many children, needy people and others), the cost of even simple medicines can be a barrier to treatment for a wide range of conditions.

Medical Relief Program Description

CitiHope's implementation strategy in Belarus is based on the existing situation in healthcare system with the goal of supporting public health care in Belarus – a country with limited resources and affected by the Chernobyl man-made catastrophe through:

- a) delivery of modern drugs and medical supplies to healthcare facilities and,
- b) provision of drug usage information on donated medicines to local medical professionals with training in rational usage.

Humanitarian Assistance Needs

Cardiology disease in Belarus is increasing at an alarming rate. Hypertensives and statins to treat a large number of needy patients are a high priority throughout the country.

Pharmaceuticals to treat **oncology** patients are a number one need based on the number of children and other needy patients facing a battle with cancer, due to Chernobyl consequences.