

**CENTER FOR HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT
ENTREPRENEURS IN HEALTH PROGRAM
2019 ANNUAL REPORT**



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Yerevan, 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

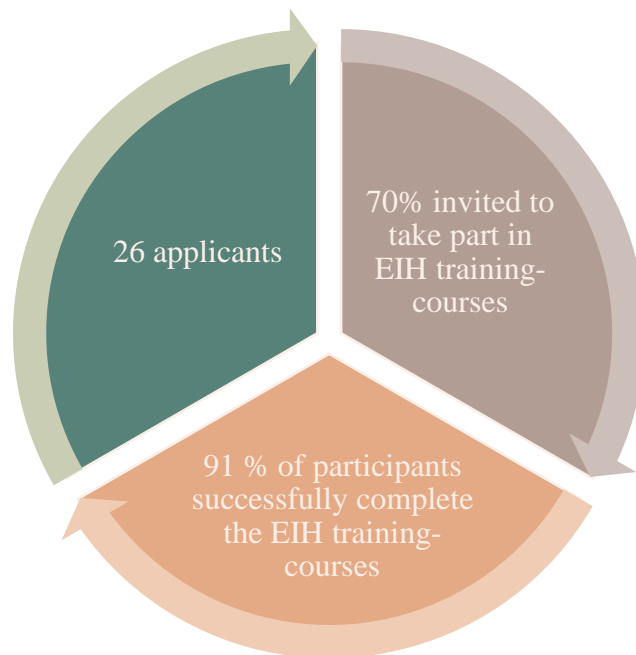
In 2006, Gerald Turpanjian, a long-time benefactor and international philanthropist, donated \$5 million to the American University of Armenia (AUA) for encouraging rural economic development. As a result, the Turpanjian Rural Development Program (TRDP) was launched, aiming to provide education and entrepreneurship opportunities to people living in rural communities of the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Artsakh, and Javakhk region in the Republic of Georgia. With the support of TRDP, to date 1260 applicants have completed the training courses, 393 businesses have been established, and 640 jobs have been created.

The specific interest among TRDP applicants toward establishing private practices in healthcare served as a cornerstone for establishing the “Entrepreneurs in Health” (EIH) new program in 2016. EIH aims to increase access to quality health services in the rural communities and regional small towns of Armenia, Artsakh, and Javakhk by encouraging the establishment and/or expansion of private medical practices.

The main components of the EIH program include:

- EIH equips healthcare professionals willing to establish private practices in rural communities with the necessary knowledge and skills through focused training courses in *healthcare quality and entrepreneurship*. EIH participants prepare and submit their Business Plans and Quality Assurance Plans, which go through several steps of review and approval.
- Upon approval of the Business Plans and Quality Assurance Plans, EIH coaches its beneficiaries in the preparation of their individual application packages to participating local banks for *low-interest (6%) loans* to establish new or to expand existing practices.
- EIH provides program beneficiaries with continuous professional support and networking opportunities for collaboration with healthcare professionals in the same field from Armenia and diaspora.
- EIH ensures the monitoring and evaluation of the operating private practices under the program.
- EIH provides additional support to the beneficiaries from border communities.

2. 2019 PROGRAM STATISTICS



3. TRAINING COURSES ORGANIZED WITHIN EIH

In the period January to December 2019, 10 trainings and courses were organized and conducted within EIH for senior healthcare professionals, medical residents and EIH applicants.

3.1. TRAININGS IN “CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT”

In addition to the “Continuous quality improvement” training campaign all over Armenian regions in the period November 2017- December 2018, two training rounds were organizing for senior healthcare professionals in Spitak town of Lori region and Kapan town of Syunik region, in March 2019.

Training rounds continued in Stepanakert, Martuni and Martakert cities of the Republic of Artsakh, for senior healthcare professionals (including military physicians) in October 2019. All the training participants, who successfully completed the trainings received 12 Professional Development credits approved by the Ministry of Health(MOH) of Armenia

Table 1 in the Annex presents detailed information on all the completed trainings.

3.2. COURSES FOR EIH APPLICANTS

3.2.1 “ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS” COURSE FOR EIH NEW APPLICANTS

The “Entrepreneurship Skills” course was organized for EIH new applicants in the period May 30- July 19, 2019, at the American University of Armenia. Seven Physicians and medical residents participated, all of them successfully completed the course and submitted their Business Plans. The Business Plans were presented to the committee of experts on August 8, 2019.



3.2.2 “BASICS OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT MANAGEMENT” COURSE FOR EIH IN-PROGRESS APPLICANTS

Another conceptual cornerstone of EIH, the Healthcare Quality Assurance was explored by EIH in-progress applicants during the “Basics of quality improvement management” course, organized on October 2-20, 2019. Out of nine participants, eight successfully completed the course. During the preparation of the Quality Assurance Plans the participants were guided and supervised by the researchers of the Onanian Center for Health Services Research and Development(CHSR) at Turpanjian School of Public Health, AUA. The Quality Assurance Plans were presented to the committee of experts in two stages: on November 23 and November 26, 2019.

Upon completion of this course, all the senior healthcare professionals who successfully completed the course received 26 CPD credits approved by the MOH of Armenia.



3.2.3 “HEALTHCARE ACCOUNTING” COURSE FOR EIH IN-PROGRESS APPLICANTS

All the EIH applicants, who completed the “Entrepreneurship skills” course in Yerevan or TRDP regional offices were invited to take part in the “Healthcare accounting” course, providing future entrepreneurs with practical accounting skills. The course was held in the period December 4-14, 2019 at the American University of Armenia. Seven EIH in-progress applicants participated, six of them successfully completed the course.



4. ARTSAKH MODEL FOR EIH

In the period April-May, 2019, the EIH field operations manager conducted a brief needs assessment of the health care system of Artsakh, aiming in shaping the EIH program strategy to be implemented there.

The assessment was conducted utilizing in-depth interviews (IDIs) in the cities of Stepanakert, Martuni, Hadrut and the village of Metz Tagher, with the purposively selected individuals, including the employees of the Ministry of Health of Artsakh, health care providers from the region of Hadrut, and one private entrepreneur dentist.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured field guide for the IDIs, consisted of 4 sections designed to explore 1) the health status of the population in Artsakh in general and the region of Hadrut, as well as the availability and accessibility of health services there; 2) the health care sector human resources in Artsakh; 3) the availability and need for extra health care services within the regions; 4) the potential issues in establishing a private practice.

After completing the needs assessment and discussing several models of Implementing EIH in Artsakh, it was

decided to start with the EIH as it is implemented in Armenia, though with practice options limited to the pharmacies and dental clinics, as those are the only practices allowed to be established within the private health sector in Artsakh. EIH is continuing to explore further steps to come up with an approach to extend the options to medical practices as well.

5. DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM'S PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

Since a number of EIH applicants are dentists, it was decided to implement a dental hygiene program, aimed at the improvement of oral health of the general population living in rural communities of Armenia, Artsakh, and Javakheti (Georgia), that have an operating dental clinic supported by the EIH.

The program's objectives include:

1. Implement preventive dental procedures and dental hygiene related awareness-raising practices into the mandatory scope of activities/services provided by dental clinics supported by the EIH program (hereinafter- EIH dental clinics).
2. Improve the availability of affordable dental hygiene services at EIH dental clinics.
3. Increase the flow of patients to the EIH dental clinics.

The first component (recruitment and training of local professionals) of dental hygiene program is implemented in the year 2019, and started with the recruitment of American University of Armenia (AUA) Master of Public Health (MPH) program graduates, who have an educational background in dentistry, are fluent in Armenian and show willingness to be involved in the current program.

The Training of Trainers (TOT) course was organized and conducted in the period December 17-19, 2019, at the American University of Armenia and was held by Ms. Adrine Reganian, teaching faculty at Pasadena City College, Dental Hygiene Program.

After the TOT course, all the recruited AUA MPH dentists perceived knowledge in up to date preventive dental care being practiced in the US as a standard of care, particularly, in all the noninvasive caries prevention measures. Upon the implementation of the current program, the trained AUA MPH dentists are going to teach the EIH dentist applicants, they will be involved in guidance of EIH dentists to organize awareness raising and screening activities in their communities, as well as in the research component in later stages of the program.

The next components of the dental hygiene program include:

- Development of a policies and procedures manual of the dental hygiene program.

- Implementation of a mandatory course on preventive dentistry for all EIH dentist applicants and beneficiaries in a continuous manner.
- Oral health-related awareness raising and screening activities conducted by the EIH dentists in their communities in a continuous manner.



6. MENTORSHIP COMPONENT'S PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The idea of implementing the concept of mentorship into EIH aimed at improving EIH beneficiaries' performance in the assurance of the quality of health services and entrepreneurship.

After the series of discussion on the best shape of EIH Mentorship component in the period April-May 2019, the terms of collaboration between mentor and mentee were defined and two stages of professional guidance were highlighted: guidance during the Quality Assurance Plan preparation (mentor) and throughout running the established service (advisor).

In October-November 2019, EIH implemented the first stage of the mentorship component, assigning mentors to each in-progress EIH applicant undergoing a Quality assurance course and preparing a Quality assurance plan. EIH used the collaboration between AUA MPH Masters project adviser and student as a model and adopted it to EIH applicant's needs. The role of mentors was taken from CHSR researchers.

7. EIH PROMOTION AND INCREASE OF VISIBILITY

7.1 EIH AT THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS OF ARMENIA

EIH participated in the 5th International Medical Congress of Armenia, held in the period July 3-6, 2019 in Yerevan. This participation aimed at increasing EIH visibility among the Armenian medical community from around the world and recruitment of potential advisers for EIH beneficiaries, for future implementation of the

second stage of the mentorship component. Five diaspora physicians expressed interest in advising EIH beneficiaries.



7.2 OFFICIAL PRESENCE ON WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA

For the purpose of promotion and public outreach, a user-friendly EIH web-page and a Facebook page were created in Spring 2019.

The EIH official web page (<https://eih-trdp.aua.am/>) contains full information required for applicants, including its history, application requirements and process, frequently asked questions, as well as reports and publications. Besides, an interactive map shows all EIH active practices linked with press releases on their success stories.

EIH official Facebook page (fb.com/eih.trdp) is used as a platform for interaction with potential applicants, promotion and dissemination of EIH news and updates.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 2020

The EIH program continues to support prospective and current beneficiaries to reach their goals and address existing gaps in rural healthcare services of Armenia, Artsakh, and Javakhhk.

The proposed activities for the year 2020 include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Boost the EIH research component
- ✓ Full implementation of a mentorship program whereby professionals from the Diaspora will serve as mentors of EIH beneficiaries

- ✓ Launch of a Dental Hygiene Program that focuses on preventive dentistry for implementation in the communities where dental clinics have been established with EIH support
- ✓ Recruitment of new potential EIH participants

ANNEX

Table 1: “Continuous quality improvement” trainings in the republics of Armenia and Artsakh

Republic of Armenia				
city	date	Workplace(s) of training participants	N of participated HPs	N of successfully completed HPs
Spitak town (Lori region)	March 22-23, 2017-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spitak MC* 	5	2
Kapan town (Syunik region)	March 29-30, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kapan MC • Kajaran MC 	23	22
Republic of Artsakh				
city	date	Workplace(s) of training participants	N of participated HPs	N of successfully completed HPs
Stepanakert	October 4-5, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Arevik” pediatric hospital • Shushi regional MC • Stepanakert Tuberculosis dispenser • Ivanyan Military hospital • Ministry of Health of Artsakh 	23	15
Stepanakert	October 11-13, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stepanakert republican MC • Ministry of Health of Artsakh 	22	7
Martuni	October 17-18, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martuni regional MC • Martuni military hospital • Sos HP** • Chartar HP • Gish HP 	18	10
Martakert	October 25-26, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martakert regional MC • Martakert military hospital • Getavan HP 	25	11
			116	67

* MC - medical center

** HP- Health post