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News Release

Global Healing and Jo Ann Medical Center Receive Funding from Partner USAID to Begin Construction of Pediatric Oncology-Hematology Center in The Republic of Georgia

Center Will Be the First National-Scale Pediatric Oncology-Hematology Center in Georgia

BERKELEY – The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has awarded a pivotal grant of \$700,000 from its American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program to U.S. nonprofit Global Healing and Tbilisi-based Jo Ann Medical Center (JAMC) to begin construction of the first national-scale pediatric hematology-oncology center in the Republic of Georgia. The program will improve health outcomes for some of Georgia’s most vulnerable patients, children suffering from cancer.

The Georgia Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Program will bring JAMC together with experts from leading U.S. cancer centers, including St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital and Yale University/Yale New Haven Children’s Hospital. Backed by Global Healing, USAID, and the Government of Georgia, the consortium will create a state of the art childhood cancer care facility for Georgia and the Caucasus Region. The center will utilize evidence-based medicine and current best practices to comprehensively tackle childhood cancer.

Cancer experts in Georgia estimate that approximately 200 new cancer cases are diagnosed annually among children and adults under the age of 22. Of those, fewer than half will survive. While local facilities exist for the treatment of childhood cancer, services are not comprehensive and, overall, the existing clinics do not provide multidisciplinary care for children.

The Georgia Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Program will bring new hope to these children and their families by providing a comprehensive array of services including bone marrow transplantation and multidisciplinary patient-centered care. Children with complex tumors and recurrent cancers will be treated in Georgia. Access to care will not be limited by a family's ability to send children out of the country for treatment.

With support from USAID ASHA, new construction and remodeling of the existing JAMC facility will begin so the center can expand its services and build out the pediatric wing to accommodate both inpatient and outpatient cancer services. Once the construction project is under way (completion expected in 2024), a comprehensive training program will be coordinated through St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Department of Global Pediatric Medicine, and Yale University resulting in the creation of a new multidisciplinary, comprehensive, state of the art Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Program at the JAMC.

"This new initiative helps fulfill the promise of the JAMC to provide state of the art pediatric care and builds on the vision of Global Healing to build local capacity to care for critically ill children," said John Donnelly, president of Global Healing. "We are very grateful to USAID for helping us take this bold first step."

The Georgian Ministry of Labour, Health, and Social Affairs has expressed their commitment to ensuring national adoption of treatment protocols and standards of care developed through this new program, which will ensure a multiplier effect on a national scale. Upon successful implementation of the program, the JAMC will set the standard regionally and will be positioned to provide residency and fellowship training to Georgian physicians as well as training opportunities to physicians and nurses from other nations in the Caucasus region.

About the Partners

US Agency for International Development

USAID is the world's premier international development agency and a catalytic actor driving development results. USAID's work advances U.S. national security and economic prosperity, demonstrates American generosity, and promotes a path to recipient self-reliance and resilience. USAID's Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (USAID/ASHA) provides assistance to schools, libraries, and medical centers outside the United States that serve as study and demonstration centers for American ideas and practices. USAID/ASHA awards help cultivate positive relationships between citizens of the United States and other nations.

Global Healing is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Berkeley, California. Our vision is a world where all children and mothers with life-threatening conditions are cared for by local, skilled healthcare professionals. Global Healing trains physicians, nurses, and medical laboratory professionals in lower income countries to implement current best practices for improved patient care. In our 20+ year history, we have successfully implemented programs in Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Ukraine, Honduras, Dominica, Haiti, and Vietnam.

The Jo Ann Medical Center (JAMC) was founded in Tbilisi, Georgia in 1996 as a nonprofit nongovernmental organization dedicated to providing cutting-edge and equitable medical care to all. This status is unique in Georgia where the healthcare system has been privatized and currently operates on a for-profit model. The JAMC has also been a pioneer in the Georgian healthcare system by developing and implementing modern surgery and management of congenital malformations of the cardiovascular/respiratory system, pediatric cardiac intensive care, modern blood banking, extracorporeal life support, and pediatric arrhythmia and fetal cardiology services.

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