

Iraq Ministry of Health Weekly Update

MOH–OCPA Health Team Current Policies and Initiatives, Vol. 12, Wednesday, August 27, 2003

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **DELEGATION VISITS IRAQ HOSPITAL**
- **SPINAL CORD HOSPITAL DESTROYED IN BLAST**
- **MOH BRIEFS THE COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION**
- **MOH ASSISTS WITH FORENSICS**
- **CDC ASSISTS LAB ANALYSIS**
- **MOH TEAM VISITS MUJAHEDIN CAMP**
- **MOH PROCURES REFRIGERATED TRUCKS**
- **SR ADVISOR MEETS WITH CLERICS**

Congressional Delegation Visits Iraqi Hospital

A delegation of 11 Congressional representatives, including Reps. Tom Davis, R-VA and Chris Shays, R-CT were provided a first-hand look at Iraq's healthcare system as they visited Al-Yarmouk Teaching Hospital in Baghdad on Monday. The visit was part of a fast-paced two day visit to various CPA and CJTF-7 functions in Iraq. While at Al-Yarmouk, the delegation received a tour of the facility and the opportunity to meet with staff. Escorted by COL Fred Gerber, current capabilities were explained, as were infrastructure repairs and upgrades needed to bring this facility up to modern standards of healthcare.

Spinal Cord Hospital Destroyed in Blast

While the tragedy of the bombing of the UN Headquarters in Baghdad was devastating in its own right, there was yet another innocent victim of this act terror. Al-Qif, Iraq's only spinal cord injury facility was in close proximity to the Canal Hotel and was deemed a total loss by US and Iraqi surveyors. This facility is the only one of its kind in Iraq, and had recently undergone major refurbishment. Some of the 76 patients at the facility received minor injuries in the blast and all were transferred to alternate hospitals or discharged to home care. Planning continues to rebuild this facility or build a separate facility that would offer these critically-needed services for Iraqi.

MoH Briefs Council For International Coordination

At the invitation of Ambassador Belka, the chairman of the Council for International Coordination (CIC), the MOH briefed over 50 personnel representing 15 countries on Monday. Colonel David Adams from the CPA/MOH staff provided insights of the Iraqi healthcare system during the previous regime, the current status of Iraqi healthcare and challenges to rebuilding Iraq's healthcare system for the future. The briefing was well received, and a number of issues were addressed that clarify requirements that rely on international assistance. The briefing established the foundation for consideration of international assistance that will be sought at the upcoming Donors Conference, scheduled for October in Madrid.

MOH Assists with Forensics

The MOH Medical Legal Institute (MLI) received donated medical instruments from US Army pathologists from Washington DC. These instruments will greatly assist investigators performing necessary autopsies of persons exhumed from mass graves. They are also involved with the identification and repatriation

of those who died from the current conflict. There are several other mass

grave sites and temporary gravesites to be exhumed. The MOH MLI expects their work will take months to complete. Additionally, the MLI has been busy with tasks related to the recent Jordanian embassy bombing.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Assists Lab Analysis

Three laboratory samples from seven extremely severe (fulminant) cases of hepatitis were sent to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta for further evaluation this week. The CDC will assist Iraqi efforts to determine the cause of this potentially fatal disease. This disease has caused five deaths in Iraq in recent weeks.

MOH Team Visits Mujahedin Camp

Mr James Haveman, Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Health and his team visited a Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) camp northeast of Baghdad last Friday. The MEK was supported by the former regime in their political cause against Iran. Since the war, they have been in need of medical assistance, particularly drugs provided by Kimadia, Iraq's central medical supply system.



Mr. Haveman hands over refrigerated pharmaceuticals to MEK officials.

Mr Haveman delivered two trucks of sorely needed drugs and supplies as part of the visit.

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Additionally, he committed to better understanding their specific healthcare needs and to include them in our healthcare rebuilding efforts.

MOH Successfully Procures Refrigerated Trucks

With the assistance of the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Health successfully obtained two refrigerated trailers for mortuary use at the Forensic Institute. This addition increases the functional handling capacity at the morgue by 40 bodies (from 48 to 88 bodies), and provides much needed surge capacity in the event of a mass casualty generating event. Efforts continue to repair air handlers at the Forensic Institute.

Senior Advisor Visits with Area Clerics

On Saturday Mr Haveman and another MOH staff member visited with 13 clerics from the Al Doura district. Concerns about healthcare delivery and a variety of other community issues were discussed. These clerics are key to gaining support for MOH initiatives within their areas of influence.