INTRODUCTION

The Primary Healthcare Reform Project (PHCR), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the TASC2 IQC No. GHS-I-00-03-00031-00, was issued to Emerging Markets Group, Ltd. (EMG) on September 30, 2005. Subcontractors on this project are IntraHealth International, Overseas Strategic Consulting, Ltd. and American University of Armenia's Center for Health Services Research.

This PHCR Project Quarterly Report describes the project activities and results during the period of January 1 to March 31, 2007.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BMC	Yerevan State Basic Medical College
FAP	Feldscher-Akuscher Punkt (Health Post)
FM	Family Medicine
FN	Family Nursing
HF	Healthcare Finance
IRM	Information Resource Management
MIS	Management Information Systems
MOH	Ministry of Health
NHA	National Health Accounts
NIH	National Institute of Health
OE	Open Enrollment
PHC	Primary Healthcare
QOC	Quality of Care
SHA	State Health Agency
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
UFMC	Unified Family Medicine Curriculum
UFNC	Unified Family Nursing Curriculum
WB	World Bank
WG	Working Group
YSMU	Yerevan State Medical University

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A. COMPONENT 1: EXPANSION OF PHC REFORMS.

A1. Project effectively communicating with external world, counterparts and USAID.

- PHCR Quarterly Bulletin #5 (Q1, 2007) developed and will be distributed to more than 100 Project counterparts and stakeholders, including Health Advisory Board members from Lori, Shirak, Kotayk, Gegharkunik and Tavush, as well as 45 communities in Lori and Shirak (on-going activity).

A2. Project monitoring system operational.

- PHCR revised the baseline facility assessment instruments to be used for baseline facility survey in Zone 2 comprising Gegharkunik, Tavush and Kotayk. PHCR started preparations to conduct the survey, pending selection of renovation target sites.

A3. PHCR activities begun in Zone 02.

- Ongoing collaboration with stakeholders in Gegharkunik, Tavush and Kotayk marzes, including identifying PHC facilities in need of renovation and introduction of the OE system.

A4. PHC facilities renovated and equipped through zonal rollout.

- Work is underway to define PHCR renovation targets in Zone 2. PHC facility mapping in Gegharkunik, Tavush and Kotayk is completed and PHCR engineers visited and assessed more than 60 facilities. Thirty-five PHC facilities have now been short-listed, and another twelve are still under consideration. Internal discussions of the short-listed PHC facilities are ongoing. The potential renovation targets will also be discussed with the health officials and advisory boards of the Zone 2 marzes (A4.1.).
- PHCR delivered furniture and equipment to 18 FAPs and one polyclinic in Lori; 20 FAPs in Shirak and Lori; the Shirak nursing college; and three clinical training sites at ambulatories. Delivery of the same is also planned for one or two IT training rooms and the MOH Licensing Department in Yerevan. Formal transfer and acceptance acts for renovated premises and commodities were signed with all recipients (A4.2).
- In collaboration with key stakeholders and USAID, PHCR revised the list of medical equipment and supplies to be delivered to renovated facilities. To comply with source origin requirements and obtain competitive bids, the medical equipment list was divided into two lists - one to be procured by EMG's Home Office and a smaller list that can be procured locally. Both procurements are underway. (A4.5).

A5. PHC physical improvements sustained by rational management procedures.

- Printing of Facility Maintenance Guide for distribution to PHCR renovated facilities is underway.

B. COMPONENT 2: FAMILY MEDICINE.

B1. Project assistance improved the PHC/FM regulatory framework.

- The FM Team began the assessment of the FM associations' needs in order to upgrade their policy-making capacity.
- At the MOH's request, PHCR printed 100 copies of the MOH regulatory package.

B2. FM Training Institutions have increased capacity / FM faculties strengthened.

- Drafted and agreed with all key stakeholders the SOW for Dr. Aram Kaligyan to deliver clinical skills development training to FM clinical preceptors. This STTA is scheduled for June 2007.

B3. Family Medicine Curriculum is up-to-date with training modules.

- Contract for development of training package for "Cardiology for Family Physicians" module was signed with YSMU on February 1, 2007.

  During February-March, FM team closely worked with the Cardiology Module working group to revise draft materials against EBM resources, available guidelines, and local regulations. On March 29, the first draft training package was submitted to PHCR for acceptance. PHCR accepted the first draft with a provision that the missing materials on arrhythmia will be finalized, revised and submitted to PHCR prior to the commencement of the training course on the cardiology module.

- On February 28, PHCR met with World Vision to discuss collaboration in delivering continuing medical education to PHC physicians and nurses. Both teams presented their current activities and plans.

B4. FM clinical training sites upgraded in Yerevan and at Marz level.

- PHCR Acting COP and FM Team leader together with the head of Tavush marz Health and Social Security Department visited Ijevan Mother and Child Health training center to determine feasibility of converting the latter into an FM training center.

B5. FM providers retrained with continuous family medicine education.

- PHCR delivered two one-day training courses on EBM approach in primary healthcare to 30 family physicians and clinical preceptors from Lori and Shirak marzes. The topic of the first seminar was *"EBM Approach in Preconception Care"*, the second covered: *(i) Family planning methods, counseling; (ii) EBM approach in pre-natal care and FM provider counseling; (iii) EBM approach in Postpartum Care"*. PHCR received highly positive feedback from the participants regarding the course; the results of the pre- and post-tests for the first and the second training course were 42% and 82% (average for the two marzes), and 34% and 96%, respectively.

B6. FN training departments in marz based nursing colleges upgraded.

- PHCR visited Martuni (Gegharkunik marz) and Hrazdan (Kotayk marz) nursing colleges for capacity assessment. Although both institutions were found physically appropriate to host training of health post nurses from the two marzes, they still lack qualified trainers and training/didactic materials and tools.

B7. Unified Family Nursing Curriculum developed (1-3).

- On February 15, PHCR held the presentation of the new Unified Family Nursing Curriculum developed with PHCR technical assistance. More than 25 participants were invited, including education policy makers, National Institute of Health (NIH) and Yerevan State Basic Medical College management and FN chair representatives, deputy directors of regional nursing colleges. Representatives from health care projects implemented by USAID and other donor organizations also attended. During the workshop, PHCR presented the structure and the content of the UFNC and informed about PHCR plans for training of 130 FAP nurses from Zone 1 marzes based on UFNC.

- Training package on cardiovascular diseases for family nurses developed by Kathleen White, nursing expert from the American University of Armenia and are being translated into Armenian.

B8. PHC nurses have completed UFNC training and retraining.

- Conducted extensive planning and contract negotiations with NIH for the delivery of UFNC training to 130 nurses in Lori and Shirak marzes. On March 30, contract with NIH was signed and preparation phase of the training in Vanadzor and Gyumri began. PHCR will assist Yerevan-based FN chairs and regional colleges in organizing the training process, including logistics, preparation and distribution of training materials. Coordination meetings with NIH and BMC FN trainers who will provide training in Vanadzor and Gyumri colleges are ongoing (B8.1).
- PHCR held meetings with FN stakeholders and international organizations involved in nurse training to work out an optimum format for delivery of training to family nurses in Zone 2 marzes. As result of the discussions, a decision was reached to coordinate efforts to achieve maximum coverage of training to FAP nurses nationwide. In particular, it is reasonable to expect that by the end of 2010, in cooperation with Jinishian Memorial Foundation and the WB PIU, it will be possible to train 70-80% of FAP nurses in Zone 2 and 3 marzes. The Project will facilitate drafting and signing of a memorandum of understanding between the MOH, World Bank, JMF and PHCR.

B9. Independent FM practices established.

- On March 26, PHCR had a meeting with AUA president Dr. Haroutune Armenian to discuss opportunities for cooperation in promoting the establishment of independent FM practices. Agreement was reached to coordinate activities in this regard.

C. COMPONENT 3: OPEN ENROLLMENT.

C1. Policies and regulations in place to support open enrollment.

- On January 18, the MOH approved, and on January 31 the Ministry of Justice ratified, the enrollment and transfer forms, as well as procedures for their circulation and maintenance developed by PHCR. On March 1, the MOH also approved the OE implementation manual and the OE public education manual for PHC providers. The transfer forms will become effective starting October 2007, when selection of a physician from another PHC facility will be allowed.

- During February-March, PHCR held workshops in each marz to coordinate OE system launch activities. The invitees were marz heads of Health and Social Security Departments, PHC facility managers and PHC physicians. In total, more than 400 participants attended the workshops. At each workshop, PHCR team delivered presentations on OE legal documents, forms, strategy, policy and procedures, public awareness campaign and health information system, and provided answers to questions raised by the attendees. PHCR distributed to all participants a set of OE materials comprising OE regulations, enrollment and transfer forms with filling instructions, etc.

C3. OE information and reporting system functional for launch of OE in Year 2007.

- Completed evaluation of bids received for two major tenders announced in December 2006—for computer hardware and software, and for delivery of training to IT staff.

- Revised the lists of PHC facilities receiving hardware equipment in light of the recently adopted government decree N1911-N on Health System Modernization.

- PHCR OE IT specialists started the development of software tool designated to help converting data from OE databases in 13 PHC Armenia Social Transition Project (ASTP) pilot sites into the format envisaged by the new OE automated information system.
- On March 1, the MOH approved the User Manual for OE automated information system developed by PHCR IT specialists.
- Municipality of Yerevan approved the PHCR-developed OE IT training plan for OE personnel nominated by Yerevan PHC facilities. Finalized the list of candidates for IT training in Yerevan.

D. COMPONENT 4: QUALITY OF CARE.

D2. Improved capacity at MOH Licensing Department.

- PHCR continues to provide technical assistance to build the capacity of the MOH Licensing Department. Basic modules of the licensing information system are now complete and tested, and our IT specialists continue to work to enhance the functionality of the system by adding new features. PHCR contracted data entry operators to enter licensing data into the database
- Engaged a licensed architectural/engineering company to develop the specification and drawings for the renovation/construction of the MOH Licensing Department at the new space allocated by of Government of Armenia.

D3. Monitoring system for QoC implemented in each PHC network.

- The PHCR-developed new Medical Record form was approved by MOH and submitted for ratification to the Ministry of Justice.

  PHCR further revised the draft "Quality of Care Package" incorporating comments from Lori, Shirak and Yerevan PHC facilities. The package was further revised and redrafted to include quality performance indicators to be monitored, assessed and linked to performance-based payment, which were agreed upon at the meeting with MOH (D3.2, D3.3).

  Following review of the package by IntraHealth's home office the following new documents were also developed and added to the package:

  - *Appendix 9: "Healthcare provider's direct observation form"*
  - *Appendix 10: "Procedure of healthcare provider's direct observation by supervisor or peer"*
  - *Appendix 11: "Action plan for supporting Quality improvement"*
- Finalized and submitted to USAID Report on the Baseline Assessment Study of the Quality Performance of PHC Physicians in selected sites.

D4. Patients have access to primary healthcare family medicine at good level of quality of care.

- Based on discussions with USAID, PHCR revised the Year 2 work plan to include development of only one job aid on hypertension by the end of this project year. PHCR will assist in the development of job aids on other topics based on the level of ownership MOH, NIH and FM associations will take in this initiative.

E. COMPONENT 5: HEALTHCARE FINANCE.

E1. NHA data collected, reports developed. Model developed to integrate NHA into budgeting process.

- PHCR provided technical assistance to the NHA Working Group in primary and secondary data collection, data cleaning, analysis, as well as completing the main NHA matrixes for 2005. Developed "main journal", allowing to classify, register and store the flow of health expenditures.

E2. National budgeting awareness at facility level.

- Upon request from marz Health and Social Security Departments (HSSD), PHCR reviewed the three-year strategic plans submitted by Lori and Shirak PHC facilities and developed a feedback report. The feedback report was presented to heads of HSSDs and the PHC facility managers at workshops held in Vanadzor and Gyumri.

E3. National MOH health planning and budgeting process is based on policy objectives.

- Based on joint action plan agreed with DFID Project, provided technical assistance to MOH in the development of part 3 of the 2008-2010 MTEF related to defining quality and quantity indicators for PHC budget program.

E5. SHA and facility reimbursement reporting system streamlined.

- PHCR Healthcare Finance Team assessed and finalized the list of performance indicators to be linked with additional financing and drafted regulatory document on performance-based payment program. This was submitted to USAID and SHA.
- PHCR STTA assessed MIDAS-2 system applicability and development options for nationwide expansion to PHC facilities.

E6. Cost of services is determined.

- PHCR developed methodology for normative costing of PHC laboratory and instrumental services and presented to MOH and SHA for feedback. Work will commence once MOH approval is obtained.

E7. Financial management systems and computer equipment are in place at targeted facilities.

- PHCR performed a comparative review of all financial accounting software packages available in Armenia based on criteria and specifications established to best meet PHC facilities' needs and selected "AS Accountant". Planning and negotiations are underway to further customize the software for PHC facilities and implement them in target facilities.
- PHCR conducted meetings with accountants of PHC facilities in Zone 2 and distributed questionnaires developed with the purpose to assess their financial accounting/reporting needs (Kotayk-March 2; Gegharkunik-March 13; Tavush -March 15) (E7.1, E7.2).

E8. Skills and methods for workforce planning and rural incentives are transferred to MOH.

- Developed SOW for international STTA in workforce planning and sent to USAID for feedback.

F. COMPONENT 6: PUBLIC EDUCATION.

F1. Public education campaign on OE and FM reach the population.

- Developed the first draft report on Baseline Household Health Survey in 11 Armenian marzes, which is currently under review.

F3. Health-literacy and health-seeking behavior is improved.

- PHCR is finalizing health education training manuals for our selected NGOs in Shirak and Lori marzes to train established Community Heath Committees in 21 communities on eight selected topics through our small grants program.
- Public Education manuals on Child Care are developed based on already existing materials approved by MoH and/or USAID. World Vision Armenia provided electronic versions of Healthy Child Nutrition and Care and Healthy and Sick Child Care brochures per request from PHCR. Armenia Eye Care Project (AECP) provided materials on Child Eye Care and Child Eye Injury Prevention.

F4. General awareness of Open Enrollment process established in the general population.

- Discussed with the MOH and finalized OE poster content. A message on who are the PHC providers (including family physicians) will be a part of the poster.
- Developed a guideline for PHC providers on public awareness campaign in support of OE processes, which is now included in OE training package for PHC providers. Development of information leaflet on PHC services and OE reform in the form of Frequently Asked Questions is in process.
- Competitively selected A.V.T. studio LTD to produce 10-minute video tutorial on OE registration processes. Currently finalizing production details with A.V.T. studio. The video tutorial will be completed by the end of June.

  Selection of production company for development of OE-related PSA is in process.
- "Sur Ankyun" live panel discussion on OE and health reform was broadcast on February 1 through Public Radio. PHCR provided technical support during the preparation of the program.
- "Haykakan Zhamanak" daily covered OE reform processes in Armenia on March 3, 2007. PHCR provided technical support for the development of the article.
- A 25 minute "Aroghjapahutyun" ("Health Care") TV program on OE reform was broadcast via ARTV on March 12, 14 and 16, 2007. PHCR provided technical support for the development of the program.
- Held meetings with MOH to plan six additional TV health programs in the coming 10 months covering OE reform and FM outreach messages. PHCR will provide technical support (message development, scenario development, editing) during the preparation of the programs. Public TV1, AR TV and Yerkir Media TV will be used as message delivery channels.

F6. Public is aware of the service packages which are provided in primary care.

- The content and design for the year 2007 BBP poster and booklet was finalized in cooperation with MoH and is now approved by the Minister of Health.

F7. Journalists are trained and deliver media in healthcare reform issues.

- Planning and preparations are underway for PHC reform and OE training workshop for national and marz-based journalists to be held on April 12-13.

F8. Grants to NGOs result in community health action and primary care initiatives.

- On January 29, PHCR announced Request for Proposals for NGOs to implement the Stage 2 Small Grants Program in Zone 1 (Lori and Shirak). To build NGO capacity and help NGOs develop relevant grant proposals, on February 7, PHCR held a pre-bid workshop attended by six NGOs.

  PHCR Grants Committee selected four NGOs to participate in health TOT trainings.

  NGOs selected to deliver CHC Health TOT Trainings under Stage 2 in Zone 1 are as follows:
  - Meghvik NGO
  - Ajakits NGO
  - Nor Ughiner NGO
  - Apaven Hamaynknerin NGO.

- Nine NGOs out of 11 applying were short-listed for participation in the Stage 1 Small Grants Program in Zone 2 (Gegharkunik, Tavush and Kotayk). PHCR provided the short listed NGOs with orientation training and Community Health Committee capacity building TOT trainings. The RFA for implementation of the Zone 2, Stage 1 Community Health Committee Capacity Building Training to CHCs will be announced as soon as PHCR renovation targets are determined.