

CPA-Ministry of Health Accomplishments in Iraq

Addressing Immediate Priorities

Security and Stability

- Recruited, trained and provided weapons for 1,300 Facility Protective Services guards to reestablish security for Ministry of Health facilities and personnel.
- Established Internet connectivity in the Ministry of Health.
- Initiated a facilities infrastructure database to address systemic problems facing the Ministry of Health. Survey results showed more than 65 percent of the ministry's equipment didn't work. No new facilities had been built in the last 25 years. There was no program to maintain, repair or upgrade equipment.
- Began paying Ministry of Health staff and implemented a new salary schedule. Physicians previously paid \$20 per month were raised to an average of \$363 per month.
- The Senior Advisor's team moved out of the Green Zone to engage with the population early and on-site, demonstrating the willingness of the healthcare system to push forward.
- Refurbished the looted, fire-scarred Ministry of Health headquarters.
- Assessed 240 hospitals and 1,200 clinics, 90 percent of which had been looted after the war. This allowed the ministry to document the needs and prioritize resources, as well as coordinate with international health organizations.
- Implemented a co-pay program in which citizens who had the ability to pay paid approximately 25 cents US per visit at primary care clinics. Rates for all other health care were reduced by 50 percent, improving access to care. People who were indigent or who had other special needs were exempt from the co-pay. This program reversed Saddam's self-funding policy, a euphemism for making patients pay fully for their care. Those who could not pay were simply denied service.
- Rehabilitated the National Polio Laboratories.
- Renovated 52 primary health clinics.
- Provided 128 uninterruptible power system generators to keep healthcare facilities functional during power outages.

Public Health

- Initiated home water purification and flour fortification.
- Distributed supplementary food rations providing high-protein supplements to more than 240,000 high-risk Iraqi citizens, including pregnant and nursing mothers as well as malnourished children.
- Reconstituted the national blood services.
- Obtained more than 30 million doses of vaccines for a monthly immunization program that reached three million children under the age of five.
- Provided tetanus vaccinations for 700,000 pregnant women.
- Initiated a program providing supplies and training to rural birthing attendants that benefited a total of 440,000 women.
- Developed a standard pharmaceutical formulary to reflect current standards of care in developed countries and improve overall treatment options.
- Successfully integrated former Iraqi army medical professionals into the public health system, including 3,000 MDs and 12,000 ancillary professionals. This provided wide coverage of healthcare professionals throughout the country, not solely in metropolitan areas.
- Fully funded the tuberculosis program and provided the first TB training workshop in more than 10 years.
- Achieved declaration by WHO that Iraq is free of polio.
- Established a clinic for survivors of torture.
- Developed new diagnostic capabilities and additional capacity at the Central Public Health Laboratory.

Healthcare Logistics

- Procured and distributed 30,000 tons of medicines and supplies.
- Eliminated outdated drugs. Half of Iraq's pharmaceuticals were unusable, some of them 30 years old.

- Distributed 600 medical supply kits to newly refurbished clinics. Kits included basic equipment such as sterilizers, scales, stethoscopes, exam tables, privacy curtains, desks and laboratory supplies.
- Repaired 1,700 items of biomedical equipment in clinics throughout the country.
- Provided approximately \$5 million in lab equipment and supplies to reestablish the Central Public Health Laboratory, the National Center of Drug Control and Research, the Nutritional Research Institute and regional public health laboratories.
- Secured \$2 million WHO funding to modernize the central blood bank, enabling a viable blood program throughout Iraq.

Mapping the Future & Creating a Sustaining Foundation

Governance

- Ministry of Health and regional medical directors set priorities for construction and training.
- In a new concept for the national health team, working groups met to discuss crosscutting issues and interdepartmental coordination.
- Conference on control of acquired infections.
- Immunization training conference for regional health staff representatives.
- Train-the-trainer program designed & implemented to train 2,500 professionals across the country in primary healthcare.
- Budgets decentralized so regional medical directors could plan and spend according to local needs.

Professional Training & Development

- Week-long course for 30 physician trainers focusing on specialized emergency room and trauma care.
- EMS training provided to 76 first responders, forming the nucleus of a budding Iraqi medical first responder program. These professionals trained more than 500 additional EMS responders.

- National nursing conference to focus on steps needed to rebuild nursing in Iraq. There were only 300 trained and licensed women nurses in Iraq.
- Initiated Teaching Hospital nurse training in week-long intensive emergency care courses.
- Trained more than 8,000 health workers in diagnosing and treating malnourished children.
- Convened committee on medical specialties.
- Trained 45 physician trainers in advanced life support for obstetrics, supporting the ministry's capacity-building strategy to reduce high infant and child mortality rates.
- Trained 80 nurse trainers who organized training in each region to upgrade skills and competencies.
- Distributed more than 30,000 medical books and reference materials to 46 hospitals, clinics and universities throughout Iraq.

Selected highlights from *Iraq Healthcare – The Road to Recovery from Decades of Neglect*, 9/04, a report about the CPA-Ministry of Health team's work.