



SUCCESS STORY

Fighting TB through Counseling

Community nurses are the link between patients and treatment



Photo: USAID Quality Health Care Project

Himoyat, above right, counsels a patient on the importance of completing TB treatment.

“The USAID training provided us not only with knowledge but also skills which we could immediately apply in our everyday work.”

—Himoyat, a community nurse in Tashkent

The number of cases of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (TB) – a difficult to treat strain of TB – continues to increase in Uzbekistan, with the country having the highest rates of drug-resistant TB in the region. To counter this alarming trend, the USAID Quality Health Care Project and Uzbekistan’s Republican TB Center are working with community nurses to strengthen their communication and counseling skills in order to encourage patients with regular TB to finish treatment in order to prevent the development of multi-drug resistant TB. Patients often prematurely stop their TB treatment because they feel better, cannot afford transport costs to reach treatment facilities, must travel for work, or are uninformed about the consequences of uncompleted treatment. Failure to complete TB treatment can lead to the development of drug resistant TB.

In 2011, Himoyat, a community nurse who preferred not to share her last name, and 25 of her peers participated in an on-the-job workshop, led by the head nurse of Himoyat’s TB treatment facility, who was previously trained by USAID. Himoyat, who enjoys her work and interactions with patients, learned from the training that community nurses can be a crucial link between patients and treatment. “I now understand that it is important to learn what patients are thinking and planning to do.”

Himoyat is using her strengthened communication skills to understand patient concerns and convince them to stay committed to treatment. “One patient of mine would complain about the cost of transport. After the training, I spent more time talking to him, and it turned out that he had the money but wanted to spend it on cigarettes. I explained to him that it is more important to take his TB treatment. Now he comes and takes his drugs regularly.”

The training workshop for community TB nurses is part of USAID’s comprehensive program to strengthen TB and multi-drug resistant TB control in Uzbekistan through capacity-building and supportive supervision of health care providers.