

The Minsk WWC is located within Minsk Maternity Hospital No. 2 where it operates as a specialized outpatient facility offering clinical and educational services to a wide range of women, primarily from the Frunzensky district. Along with a staff of nurses, the Center employs four OB/GYNs, a part-time urologist, and a part-time psychologist, all of whom work as a team and whose high-quality work promotes the Center's reputation in the local community.

The WWC offers a wide range of



Future parents participate in a "Partners in Birth" class held at the Minsk WWC.

Будущие родители на занятии по программе "Партнерство в родах" в Минском Центре здоровья женщин.

medical services related to obstetrics/gynecology. In addition, we offer medical services related to psychology such as individual counseling of adolescent girls, women, and married couples; psychological examination/exploration of various mental conditions; and individual and group psychotherapy.

The Minsk WWC's educational programs include classes for teenagers; a school for newlyweds on family planning; family preparation classes; postnatal care and newborn massage instruction; practical training in breast self-examinations; STI prevention classes; and healthy lifestyle training and hormone replacement therapy for menopausal women.

In 1999, the Center registered 10,496 visits and provided 2,642,600,000 rubles worth of paid services. A large portion of our work involves raising the general public's awareness of personal hygiene issues through educational programs.

In 1999, 120 training sessions of "Partners in Birth" were held to pre-

pare couples for family deliveries. This program's principal objectives include creating a positive psychological and emotional climate in the family with the aim of giving birth to a healthy child; instilling a positive birth attitude in the mother; and teaching the couple breathing, massage, and relaxation-during-delivery techniques. The center also held a Republic-wide seminar on the program and many physicians from different oblasts attended.

The education of adolescents is conducted in close cooperation with the

Education Department of the Executive Committee of the People's Deputies Council of Minsk's Frunzensky district. A commission consisting of high school deputy directors and social teachers has approved the adolescent-focused program. In 1999, 166 "From Adolescence to Adulthood" classes were held in the Center, as well as at various high and vocational schools. Additional events we have participated in are:

- presentations at a seminar during an AIDS prevention week and at an interregional UN-sponsored HIV/AIDS workshop;
- a one-day seminar, supported by UNFPA, held at the Maxim Tank Teachers' Training School, entitled "Physiological and Psychological Features of Adolescence;" and
- a citywide conference on "Medical and Social Aspects of Adolescent Reproductive Health" held in conjunction with the Healthcare Department of the Minsk Municipality.

Our staff psychologist provides invaluable assistance in the work we do with adolescents and expecting families. This expert believes that a person trusted by the mother-to-be—such as a family member or friend—should be present during the birth and has succeeded in changing the attitude of the maternity hospital's staff about this option. It is no secret that maternity personnel traditionally display hostility at the idea of having couples partake in the birth process, as the couple creates additional emotional, psychological, and physical

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pressure on the staff. But after several years of assisting in numerous partner deliveries, the hospital's staff now treat the birth partner favorably, and find advantages to working together with him or her during delivery.

The Center plans to:

- increase access to family planning services and promote the use of advanced hormonal contraception techniques;
- develop methodological recommendations for medical personnel on the preparation of families for birth;
- arrange educational seminars for medical institution personnel on conducting partnership birth deliveries;
- teach a series of classes to doctors and nurses on optimizing psychological relations between medical personnel and families during delivery;
- expand the range of paid services by introducing paid educational programs;
- create a development business plan and implement a transition to self-financing and self-sufficiency; and
- cooperate closely with social organizations to focus public attention on the issue of each individual's responsibility for his or her own health.

ABOUT THE MINSK WWC

Date opened: May 1998
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