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P R E S S R E L E A S E

New Kathnaghbyur Health Post Opened

October 9, 2007

Kathnaghbyur, Talin Region, Aragatsotn Marz, Republic of Armenia

On Tuesday, October 9th the Kathnaghbyur community celebrated the official opening of a new health post which emerged as a result of the fruitful collaboration between Kathnaghbyur community, the RA Ministry of Health and USAID Project NOVA.

Currently USAID Project NOVA works to improve the quality of and access to maternal and child healthcare in five southern Armenian marzes (Ararat, Armavir, Aragatsotn, Vayots Dzor, Syunik) by improving the performance of healthcare workers, providing basic clinical materials & supplies, renovating healthcare facilities, and mobilizing and educating community members.

The Community Partnership for Health (CPH) is a hallmark program for Project NOVA. Although the program covers only 120 rural communities throughout Armenia, its impact has been profound. As part of this initiative, Project NOVA creates local Health Action Groups to identify existing health problems at the community level and to develop an action plan and budget in order to solve these problems.

Project NOVA has been working in Kathnaghbyur since April 2007. It is a small village near Talin with a population of 1,583 people. Previously, the old building of the health post was falling to pieces, and primary healthcare services were provided in the kindergarten. However, the conditions of the health post facilities located in the kindergarten were far from being satisfactory: the health post lacked a separate entrance, running water, electricity, basic medicines, equipment and supplies.

The community leadership provided new premises which were renovated with the cost of works totaling 2,280,000 AMD. The Minister of Health Mr. Kushkyan was personally involved in the renovation process. The Ministry of Health contributed 30% of the entire renovation budget covering expenses for new windows, doors, floor tiles, and the side walk. Kathnaghbyur community secured 46% of the budget with its in-kind and financial contributions; and Project NOVA contributed 24% of the costs.

The new health post has two rooms and a waiting area, permanent running water, sewage and electricity, and is also fully furnished. The health post now has basic equipment and supplies for maternal and child care services. Furthermore, a health library was established to promote wellbeing. Collaboration has been strengthened between the supervisory healthcare facility, the nurses and the community for the benefit of all community members.

In the near future, the community nurses from Kathnaghbyur will undergo a performance-based *Safe Motherhood Clinical Skills* training course, which will enable them to provide better maternal and child health services, and to conduct health talks raising general public awareness on health issues.

Improved physical conditions at the rural health post, more skillful and knowledgeable community nurses, the availability of basic equipment and supplies, a stronger relationship with supervising healthcare facility and physicians, as well as a more educated and mobilized community will increase utilization of the primary healthcare services at the community level, and will contribute to the overall improvement of maternal and child health in rural areas of Armenia.

For Details Contact:

Marina Vardanyan

Communication Officer

Tel: 274125; 277069; 277065, Fax: 274126

E-mail: m_vardanyan@nova.am

Website: <http://www.nova.am>