



# IMPROVING ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO CONTROL DURING PREGNANCY IN UKRAINE

*A joint initiative of USAID and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine*

For almost 20 years, USAID has been honored to cooperate with Ukraine's leading experts and health care providers, including the Ministry of Health (MOH) of Ukraine, on improving maternal and newborn care and women's reproductive health services. Recognizing the impact of these concerted efforts, both parties came together in June 2013 to launch a new project aiming to decrease alcohol and tobacco use in pregnant women.



Targeting physician counseling about the risks associated with alcohol and tobacco use during pregnancy has been shown to reduce use of alcohol and tobacco by pregnant women. *Photo by URC.*

## Background

The use of alcohol and tobacco during pregnancy poses serious risks to the health and welfare of both the mother and to her unborn baby, and include preterm birth, significant developmental disabilities such as fetal alcohol syndrome, mental and growth retardation, low birth weight, as well as asthma and sudden infant death.

Recent data on alcohol and tobacco use by women of reproductive age

in Ukraine raise concerns about the potential impact of these behaviors:

- In the most recent month of pregnancy, 46.3% of women continued to report alcohol use (*Prevalence and predictors of maternal alcohol consumption in 2 regions of Ukraine, Chambers CD, et al., 2013*)
- An estimated 2.4 million women (15+ years) smoke manufactured cigarettes; prevalence of smoking ranges from 14.7% among 15-24 year-olds to 19.8% among 25-44 year-olds (*Global Adult Tobacco Survey, Ukraine, 2010*)
- Less than half of smokers who had visited a health care provider were asked if they smoked (*Global Adult Tobacco Survey, Ukraine, 2010*)
- Counseling on reduction of alcohol use and smoking cessation during pregnancy is insufficient (<http://www.ukraineworksltd.org/home/alcohol-ukraine-current-trends>)

## JANUARY 2014

The work described is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is implemented by the USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) and USAID Health Care Improvement (HCI) projects. The USAID ASSIST Project is managed by University Research Co., LLC (URC) under Cooperative Agreement Number AID-OAA-A-12-00101, and the USAID HCI Project is managed by URC under Contract Number GHN-I-03-07-00003-00. For more information on the work of the USAID ASSIST Project, please visit [www.usaidassist.org](http://www.usaidassist.org) or email [assist-info@urc-chs.com](mailto:assist-info@urc-chs.com).

Brief Physician Interventions (BPIs) are short, physician-led counseling sessions aimed at relaying the risks associated with alcohol and tobacco use and are based on the 5 A's:

- **Ask** about alcohol and tobacco use
- **Advise** patient to quit
- **Assess** willingness to quit
- **Assist** in quitting
- **Arrange** follow-up

With an awareness of the impact alcohol and tobacco use have on the health of the nation, particularly pregnant women, women of reproductive age and newborns, USAID and the MOH are instituting support measures to decrease substance abuse in this population.

### Objectives and Approaches

The USAID ASSIST project will assist Ukrainian health care providers from 16 selected women's consultation clinics and general medicine practices in Luhansk and Poltava oblasts with implementation of effective, evidence-based

Brief Physician Intervention (BPI) counseling protocols. Screening and counseling will be made available to approximately 9,000 pregnant women annually, as well as to female adolescents and women of reproductive age to help minimize their health risks from alcohol and tobacco use.

Approaches in achieving these goals include training of providers, and training of trainers in BPI and family planning; support to providers in incorporating BPI into their routine practice; development of guidelines for nation-wide implementation of BPI and development of training curricula to be incorporated into post-graduate medical education. Through the rigorous evaluation of the project, lessons learned will be jointly developed and project results are expected to inform interventions for replication within the country and beyond.

The link to the project launch at the Ministry of Health website is as follows:

[http://www.moz.gov.ua/ua/portal/pre\\_20130611\\_a.html](http://www.moz.gov.ua/ua/portal/pre_20130611_a.html)

### Objectives of USAID ASSIST

The overall objective of the USAID ASSIST Project is to foster improvements in a range of health care processes through the application of modern improvement methods by host country providers and managers in USAID-assisted countries. The project's central purpose is to build the capacity of host country systems to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, client-centeredness, safety, accessibility, and equity of the services they provide. In addition to supporting the implementation of improvement strategies, the project seeks to generate new knowledge to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of applying improvement methods in low- and middle-income countries.