

KAZAKHSTAN

JOINING FORCES TO MODERNIZE LABORATORIES

As part of a large-scale project to modernize Kazakhstan's laboratories, the Stepwise Laboratory Improvement Process is producing immediate and measurable results. Participating laboratories now offer targeted training to other facilities within their region, spreading improvement grassroots-style, one facility at a time.

In Semey, a town on the steppe in eastern Kazakhstan by the Russian-Siberian border, sits one of Kazakhstan's many laboratories. Semey laboratory needed crucial updating. Doors did not have locks or biohazard signs to keep patients out. A red line across the floor designated the clean area from the working area, which was confusing, especially to new staff. There was no eyewash station and most technicians were unaware of the requirement to have one.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, networks to support this laboratory and others like it faded. Directors recognized the need to modernize their laboratories and needed help coming up with a strategy for doing so.

Things needed to change.

CHANGING THE WAY LABS WORK

In 2014, the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development began working on a large-scale project to modernize Kazakhstan's laboratories alongside CDC and other international partners. The goal was to introduce the Stepwise Laboratory Improvement Process, which is a training and mentoring program developed by world experts to create immediate, measurable improvement in laboratories.

The Semey laboratory was one of five chosen for the first phase of the project. Over the 15 months of Stepwise training, the five laboratories were transformed. Each now has a designated quality manager and biosafety officer who teach staff how to meet requirements and do their jobs better. Among other improvements, Semey now has an actual wall separating the clean area from the working area. Locks and signage were added to doors, and every laboratory now has at least one eyewash station.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CONTINUED COLLABORATION

Kazakhstan now has a complete strategy to improve its laboratories. Policy documents issued by the Kazakh Government were revised to define the roles and responsibilities of reference, clinical, and public health laboratories. Strategic plans were drafted defining step-by-step expectations for laboratory achievements in future years. Together with partners, they will implement activities in the strategic plan, improve more laboratories, draft additional guidance, train the workforce, and realize new goals.

Progress in modernizing laboratories in Kazakhstan is thanks in part to support from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Foundation](#) to the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of Kazakhstan.

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Kazakhstan lab specialists at a state laboratory in Almaty.

Read the full story: http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/healthprotection/gdd/stories/kazakhstan_laboratory_reform.html