

US Wellness Center  
Korakshin 11-12-97

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**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
WOMEN'S WELLNESS CENTER  
ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN  
NOVEMBER 12, 1997**

**Acknowledgments:** From advance.

**I want to thank President and Mrs. Nazarbayev and the people of Kazakhstan for the warm welcome and generous hospitality we have received in our short time here. I have come to Kazakhstan and to Central Asia to reinforce the young but strong ties between our countries...to witness firsthand the impressive progress you are making in moving toward civil society and an economy centered around open markets and private enterprise...and to see what more we can do with you in partnership as you build a strong, stable, free future.**

**All over the world, democracy is advancing. But democracy without the participation of women is a contradiction in terms. And women cannot participate in democracy unless they have access to what I call the tools of opportunity -- legal protections, education, credit, and quality health care.**

**This center makes it clear that quality health care means comprehensive health care. Building on four years of work here in Almaty, the center will focus on education, screening, and prevention. It will help the women of Kazakhstan safeguard themselves against sexually transmitted diseases. It will provide critical screening for cervical and breast cancer. It will provide pre-natal and counseling services for women in all stages of the reproductive health cycle. And it will offer a wide range of family planning services, helping Kazakhstan to continue to reduce its high rate of abortion [down 25% since 1992, when USAID came in.] By providing the resources to deal openly and candidly with the risks of alcohol, tobacco, poor nutrition, narcotics, and violence against women both inside and outside the home, this center will enable women to lead longer, better, more secure lives. [talk about what you saw?]**

**The work done here will reach far beyond these doors. When women are healthy, children are healthy, families are healthy, and countries are health. I hope this center will work to educate and raise awareness among men, so that they can take a more active role in the birth and care of their children. And I hope it will convince women -- most of whom work outside the home and care for their families -- that they must look after their own health.**

**This wellness center is a testament to the commitment and dedication of doctors and nurses throughout Kazakhstan. As an American, I am particularly proud to be here because of the extraordinary partnership you have forged with medical professionals and hospitals in Tucson, Arizona. I am delighted that there are representatives from Tucson here today. I thank them for their work and I'm sure they would attest that they have learned and gained as much from this experience as they have given.**

**I am also proud of the role the American International Health Alliance and the United States Agency for International Development have played in this effort. As many of you know, this is one of 13 wellness centers in the New Independent States -- all based on a model of comprehensive health care created by the Aalliance. Finally, I would like to make special mention of the contribution of non-governmental organizations to this effort -- and of the role the American people and American companies have played in contributing supplies through the U.S. government's Operation Provide Hope. I hope the people of Kazakhstan will see these medicines and materials as I do -- as a clear demonstration that the American people care about the people of Kazakhstan during this historic transition.**

**But the opening of this center is most of all a tribute to the people of Kazakhstan. The Almaty City Health Administration has provided the space for this center and made its construction possible. The city will also keep the center running. Together, you are building a strong foundation not only for the health of your people, but for the future of your country.**