

**Boston University**

**OpenBU**

<http://open.bu.edu>

---

BU Publications

BU School of Medicine News: Press Releases

---

1990-09-25

# Boston University School of Medicine news: September 25, 1990

---

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/28473>

*Downloaded from DSpace Repository, DSpace Institution's institutional repository*



## Boston University School of Medicine

Department of Public Relations  
Office of Media Relations

Elizabeth E. Russell, Director

80 East Concord Street  
Robinson 7 (B-7)  
Boston, MA 02118-2393  
(617) 638-8491  
Fax: (617) 638-8044

# NEWS

For Immediate Release  
September 25, 1990

Contact: Patti Jacobs  
(617) 638-8491

### SOVIET OFFICIALS SEEK ADVICE ON REVAMPING THEIR HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM

Boston, Mass.—The average Soviet woman undergoes several abortions in her lifetime because of the unavailability of birth control; Soviet infant mortality is at least twice that of the United States; and the average Soviet male can expect to die seven years younger than his American counterpart. As a result of these grim statistics, Soviet health officials are looking at ways to revolutionize their health-care system and improve the health of the Soviet people. As part of the process, Soviet health leaders will spend September 25-28 meeting with New England and Canadian health-policy experts to exchange information and observe first-hand how various health-care systems operate. (See itinerary on page 2).

Anthony Robbins, M.D., a professor of public health at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) and the event organizer, and seven other American experts spent 12 days last April advising a special task force of the Supreme Soviet on the best way to revise the Soviet health-care system. At that time, the Soviets asked Robbins to assist them in furthering the discussions by selecting American consultants for them to interview and helping them arrange a Soviet trip to the U.S. Robbins became involved in this project through his association with the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Although the Soviet Union was the first country in the world to guarantee free medical care to every citizen, the system deteriorated over the past 30 years because of low budgets, rigid planning, lack of local control, low physician salaries and few incentives for quality. The Soviets are anxious to learn more about the Western health systems and to incorporate the principles of free enterprise into a new system.

Soviet Health Officials Visit New England  
Page 2

Robbins and his associates are urging the Soviets to use caution in their conversion to privatization. "Our goal is not to convince the Soviets that the U.S. system is right for them," he says. "We want them to see what works and doesn't work for us and what we consider positive about the system they already have in place."

Robbins notes that a meeting with Canadian officials has been scheduled to demonstrate how a system based on a regional insurance program works compared to the more complex multi-faceted U.S. system. "We think that the Canadian system might be a good model for the USSR because it combines the best of free enterprise and universal insurance," says Robbins.

During the next week the Soviets will meet with a variety of health-care experts, ranging from chief executive officers to citizen groups, and will attend the American Public Health Association annual meeting in New York.

Their itinerary for the next four days includes the following:

Tuesday, Sept. 25

6 to 8 p.m.--Dinner at the Colonnade in Boston with BUSM leaders to discuss future cooperation and exchanges.

Wednesday, Sept. 26

8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.--Visit Private Healthcare Systems, a preferred provider organization, located in Lexington, Mass., to observe first-hand how the company's 150 physicians and nurses work on-site and how they preauthorize admissions and other services.

11 a.m.--Visit Beth Israel's Ambulatory Care Center, Boston, Mass.

3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.--Meet with New Hampshire's Blue Ribbon Commission on cost containment in Concord, New Hampshire.

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.--Dinner with the Codman Research Group in Lyme, New Hampshire.

Thursday, Sept. 27

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.--Community Forum on Ethical Values in Health Care at the Holiday Inn in Rutland, Vermont.

Friday, Sept. 28

10:30 a.m.--Meet with Canadian health officials at University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont.

Call Patti Jacobs (617)-638-8491 to arrange interviews with the Soviets or their hosts.