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COMPETITIVE ARMENIAN PRIVATE SECTOR

SUCCESS STORY

Internationally Recognized Quality Standards for Armenian Pharmaceuticals

CAPS Helps Introduce Good Manufacturing Practices to Armenia



Photo by CAPS

With CAPS direct technical support, the GMP training program also resulted in the emergence of a new industry-driven Center of Excellence training center in cooperation with the Union of Medicine Producers and Importers. This organization will be the sustainable entity to carry the GMP fee-based training forward.

Since 2007 through the CAPS Project USAID has been assisting the Armenian pharmaceutical industry to adopt cluster development process. Key strategic objectives are the implementation of international quality standards; the expansion of production through tapping new geographic niche markets; improving product ranges; and insuring close government and industry cooperation.

The Armenian Pharmaceutical Industry is making dramatic steps toward the introduction of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), a quality standard that countries around the world rely on today to import and export medicines. Assessments undertaken amongst Armenian pharmaceutical companies, however, have revealed that GMP knowledge appears to be deficient in a number of areas.

“Compliance to GMP international standards is important for the Armenian pharmaceutical industry. The introduction of this standard will lead Armenia to become a center for pharmaceutical production”. Emil Gabrielyan, Director of the Scientific Center for Drug and Medical Technology Expertise said.

To address the abovementioned concerns, upon the initiative of the USAID-funded CAPS Project, the entire pharmaceutical cluster came together for the first time to organize a 13-day, comprehensive, advanced-level GMP training program during May 20 - June 6, 2009. After studying the specific problems and needs of the Armenian Pharmaceutical Sector, CAPS consultants developed a GMP Training course based on World Health Organization training modules, but specifically tailored toward EU nuances and requirements for use in Armenia.

Twenty seven graduates of the first training course representing pharmaceutical companies, academia and associations received certificates upon successful completion of the GMP training program, and 17 went on to receive additional train trainer certificates after undertaking the advanced level course that comprised the better part of three weeks. Most of the participants are now tasked and certified to become trainers in their own companies to move the industry toward full GMP compliance.

Hayley Alexander, CAPS Chief of Party highlighted the importance of introducing GMP in Armenia. “This intensive course is intended to bring the Armenian pharmaceutical industry in line with international practice and is probably the most important step the Armenian pharmaceutical industry can take now. GMP certification is no longer optional, it is absolutely necessary to expand export sales and increase import substitution. Moreover, GMP implementation can help overcome another obstacle - the quality perception problem in the domestic market.”