



Guardian Angels Ukraine

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*A humanitarian project of the
League of Ukrainian Canadian Women*

PRESS RELEASE

GUARDIAN ANGELS UKRAINE PROJECT PARTICIPATES IN NATO MEDICAL REHAB CONFERENCE AND LAUNCHES EXPERT WORKING GROUP

May 8, 2015

KYIV, UKRAINE- Representatives of the [Guardian Angels Ukraine Project](#) of the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women (LUCW) recently participated in NATO's "International Medical Rehabilitation, Mental Health Support, Institutional and Policy Considerations and Tactical Battlefield Medicine Conference" in Kyiv, which took place over three days at the Officer's House (Спілка офіцерів) in Ukraine's capital.

Participating in the NATO conference as Canadian representatives of the Guardian Angels Ukraine Project were Lisa Shymko (LUCW President and Project Honorary Chair) and Kalyna Kardash (Canadian Project Coordinator).

The conference welcomed speakers from various countries, providing a forum for exchanging insights on the current state of rehab and tactical medicine, as well as plans for improving Ukraine's health services infrastructure. Ukraine faces overwhelming challenges in providing medical and rehabilitation services for soldiers recovering from severe injuries sustained in the conflict fuelled by Russia's ongoing military intervention in Ukraine.



Left to right: Kalyna Kardash, Col. Dr. Vsevolod Stebliuk, Lisa Shymko

The Guardian Angels Ukraine (GAU) Project's Medical Coordinator in Ukraine, Colonel Dr. Vsevolod Stebliuk, chaired the afternoon session of the Opening Day of the Conference, which was dedicated to the issue of Medical Rehabilitation. Dr. Stebliuk not only holds the position of Professor of Medicine at the Department of Criminal Justice and Forensics at the National Academy of Internal Affairs, he also holds the rank of Colonel and military doctor. In 2013-2014, Dr. Stebliuk served on the EuroMaidan, as Deputy Head of the Medical Corps of the country's Revolution of Dignity. Currently, Dr. Stebliuk serves as Special Assistant to Ukraine's Minister of Defence on Medical Matters.

In his address at the NATO Conference, Dr. Stebliuk presented the challenges facing Ukraine's medical infrastructure both from the institutional and educational perspective.

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He outlined how, in cooperation with NATO and various NGO partners, such as the Guardian Angels Ukraine Project, plans are underway to re-vamp rehab services at 5 key facilities which are part of the military medical network overseen by the Ministry of Defence in Ukraine.

The Military Hospital at Irpin, with whom the Guardian Angels Ukraine project worked to establish the first psycho-physical rehab facility, will be the primary site for expanded rehab services and a template for future rehab centres linked to the military hospital network.

According to Lisa Shymko, "The GAU project will be working closely with the Ministry of Education and academic institutions, specifically, the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, to lay the groundwork for establishing a Physiotherapy Program at the university. The GAU Project will also facilitate the establishment of a Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) at Ukraine's Military Medical Academy, through a Canada-Ukraine knowledge exchange program.



Consultation meeting with Ukraine's Minister of Education, Serhiy Kvit

Dr. Vsevolod Stebliuk believes that "Ukraine's military hospitals and facilities provide the ideal clinical setting for Ukraine's emerging physiatrists and psychologists, and the GAU's psycho-physical rehab centre at the Irpin Military Hospital will be an integral part of this educational component."

Following the NATO conference, the Guardian Angels Ukraine Project confirmed its *Ukraine Expert Working Group* chaired by Colonel Dr. Vsevolod Stebliuk, and comprised of leading Ukrainian military and medical experts working in the field of rehabilitation medicine and psychology, as well as representatives of Ukraine's leading academic institutions.



Dr. Volodymyr Golyk – Chairman, Ukrainian Society for Neurorehabilitation, Ministry of Defence (Dnipropetrovsk), member GAU Project's Ukraine Expert Working Group, addresses the NATO-sponsored Conference



Right: Olesia Kalandyuk, Ukrainian Association of Physical Therapy; Coordinator and rehab advisor, Lviv Military Hospital, and member of the GAU Project's Ukraine Expert Working Group with Roman, a Ukrainian soldier treated at the rehab facility in Lviv

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Andriy Meleshevych (second from right), President of the National University Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and member of the GAU Project's Ukraine Expert Working Group, with Col. Dr. Vsevolod Stebliuk, Lisa Shymko, and Kalyna Kardash



GAU Project Ukraine Expert Working Group:

Col. Dr. Vsevolod Stebliuk (Chair) – Special Assistant to Ukraine's Minister of Defence on medical matters. Military doctor, *Myrotvorets* battalion.

Dr. Sergiy Bogdanov – National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy; Deputy Head of the Centre for Conflict Studies and Psychoanalysis. Expert to international organizations: UNFPA, UNDP, WHO.

Vitaliy Cymbaluk – Deputy Director, Romodanov Institute of Neurosurgery. Vice President, National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine.

Artur Derevyanko – Head of State Service of Ukraine for War Veterans and ATO Participants.

Volodymyr Golyk – Chairman, Ukrainian Society for Neurorehabilitation, Ministry of Defence (Dnipropetrovsk).

Olesia Kalandyak – Ukrainian Association of Physical Therapy. Coordinator and rehab advisor, Lviv Military Hospital.

Andriy Meleshevych – President, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

Dr. Irina Pinchuk – Director of Ukrainian Research Institute of Social and Forensic Psychiatry and Drug Abuse, Ministry of Health.

Natalia Voronkova – Volonterska Sotnia; Advisor to Deputy Minister of Defence on Medical Issues, Ministry of Defence.