Kyrgyzstan delegation to be part of HIV/AIDS presentation March 1

A two-hour presentation entitled “HIV Care Policy and Care Delivery” will be hosted by the HIV/AIDS Division from 2-4 p.m., Tuesday, March 1, 2005. The presentation will focus on HIV care policy, case management and an explanation of Minnesota HIV care programs. Participating in the session will be staff people from the HIV/AIDS Division of the Department of Human Services, plus a delegation from Kyrgyzstan, a republic formerly part of the Soviet Union. The group of ten will consist of physicians, local government officials and non-profit leaders. This event is funded by the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs through the Minneapolis-based organization, Connect/US-Russia.

Kyrgyzstan is estimated to have ten times their current number of 534 HIV cases in a country of only 5,081,429 people. The primary means of transmission is through intravenous drug (IV) use. There are an estimated 60,000 people injecting drugs, with a prevalence rate of 20 percent of the IV drug users in some communities. In addition, Kyrgyzstan has been experiencing consistent increases in the number of people infected through sexual transmission. Sexual transmission has increased from eight percent in 2001 to 16.5 percent in 2004.

The government in Kyrgyzstan has taken action through a syringe exchange program and active methadone programs. Through engaging the Muslim religious leaders, there has been progress in developing a successful response to AIDS in the country.

The event will be hosted in the Loon Room at the Roseville Department of Human Services. Participating from the Minnesota Department of Human Services are Michelle Sims, case management coordinator; Redwan Hamza, contracts and special projects; Jeff Buckles, data coordinator; and Dave Rompa, program administrator.

If you have questions about this training, please call 651-582-1980 or 1-800-657-3761. For more information on HIV/AIDS, visit the HIV/AIDS Division Web site @ www.dhs.state.mn.us/hivaids.

Information about CONNECT/US-RUSSIA’s Community Connections Program: Kyrgyzstan HIV/AIDS Prevention

February 23rd - March 16th, 2005

CONNECT/US-RUSSIA, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit organization, has a mission to promote a more humane and peaceful world by engaging critical issues facing the United States and the former Soviet Union. Since its inception in 1984, CONNECT has carried out a wide range of projects including government training seminars, youth exchanges, conflict resolution projects, medical cooperation, health programs, women leadership programs, social development
programs, development of domestic violence legislation, and environmental projects with individuals and groups from Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Armenia, Estonia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova, and Uzbekistan.

Funded by the United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the goal of "Community Connections Program: Kyrgyzstan HIV/AIDS Prevention" is to support professional development for the delegates by providing professional training in practical, transferable aspects of the U.S. health and social system related to HIV/AIDS. To this end, the Kyrgyz participants will be exposed to public, private and specialized agencies in order to study our approach to providing treatment and services to individuals living with HIV/AIDS, collaborations among governmental and private organizations, and laws and policies relating to HIV/AIDS.

Kyrgyzstan, a Central Asian country of incredible natural beauty and nomadic traditions, was annexed by Russia in 1864; it achieved independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. This landlocked country borders China to its west, Kazakhstan to its north, and is located south of Russia but does not border Russia. Kyrgyzstan is slightly smaller than South Dakota. Current concerns include: privatization of state-owned enterprises, expansion of democracy and political freedoms; interethnic relations; the spread of HIV among prisoners; and combating terrorism.

The territory of Kyrgyzstan is one of the ancient centers of human civilization with archaeological research prehistoric man inhabited this land since the Stone Age. The inhabitants of Kyrgyzstan have been known as the Kyrgyz people in Central Asia since the first millennium BC.

In February 1990, elections were held in traditional Soviet style to the Kyrgyz Supreme Soviet, with the Kyrgyz Communist Party (KCP) walking away with the vast majority of the seats. After multiple elections, Askar Akaev, a physicist, was installed as a compromise president and continues to be president today. Akaev has proven to be an agile diplomat, settling border disputes with neighbors China and Kazakhstan (critics say he gave too much away. He has at the same time allowed the US and Russia to establish military bases on Kyrgyz territory.

**HIV/AIDS situation:** According to UNAIDS, independent estimates put the overall number of HIV cases in Kyrgyzstan at nearly ten times the officially reported figure of 534. The leading mode of infection transmission remains intravenous, with the highest figures in the capital Bishkek and southern city of Osh. An estimated 60 000 people are injecting drug users, and in some cities the prevalence of HIV among them is over 20%. There is a trend toward an increasing number of people infected by the sexual mode of transmission—from 8% in 2001 to 16.5% in 2004—and a growing rate of HIV cases among women.
The Kyrgyz government has been proactive in responding to the HIV threat, and has implemented programs that have been running now for several years. The country has already mobilized a multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS. The State Program on the Prevention of AIDS was adopted in December 2001, with emphasis on information, training, advocacy and prevention. The state program has managed to attain some success in HIV prevention. General population awareness of HIV prevention measures has grown, and is targeted to reach 90% among youth by 2008.

The Kyrgyz Republic has become a model for other CIS countries and beyond in its methadone maintenance and syringe exchange programs in Bishkek and Osh. The latter needs urgent financial support, since its financing by international donors ended in September 2004. Innovative work has been done with the media and youth organizations to create awareness and knowledge among young people. There is also considerable progress in joint work with the religious community. Influential Muslim leaders have become essential actors in a successful response to HIV/AIDS as they have legitimacy and durable presence in local communities, particularly those in the south of the country.

The Delegates:

**Ms. Raushan Abdildaeva:** Ms. Abdildaeva, educated as a pediatrician and acupuncturist, works at the Ministry of Justice as the Coordinator of International Programs and as the Chief Inspector for Reform and Development for the Criminal Executive System Department. Previously she worked as the Chief Director of the Drug Addiction Clinic at the Central Hospital in Bishkek. While in Minnesota, she is interested in learning about methadone treatment, working with youth and prisoners with HIV, and how to stop the spread of HIV among prisoners.

**Ms. Begaim Akmatova:** Ms. Akmatova, educated as an OB-GYN physician, is the Head of the Osh Affiliate of the Family Medical Training Center where they train medical staff in the Osh Region. She is interested in learning about HIV testing practices, and about mother-to-child transmissions of HIV. Ms. Akmatova is also interested in learning about HIV/AIDS prevention programs.

**Ms. Altynay Arstanbekova:** Ms. Arstanbekova, educated in pharmaceutical science, is the Director of the Drug-Addiction Preventive Service of the National Agency for Drug Control. She is interested in learning about HIV/AIDS prevention programs and learning how state agencies make decisions on HIV/AIDS issues.

**Mr. Evgeny Besedin:** Mr. Besedin, an engineer by education, works as a youth coordinator of the Health Awareness for Youth (HAFY) project at the Tatina Mass Media Center which is a radio broadcasting service. The HAFY project focuses on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health programming directed at youth. Mr. Besedin would like to visit a radio station and learn about programs directed at HIV/AIDS prevention and visit local nonprofits.

**Ms. Ainura Davletova:** Ms. Davletova, a gynecologist, has recently been promoted to Chief Doctor of the Regional Center for Reproductive Human Health Protection in Zhalal-Abad. Some
of her duties include providing training on HIV/AIDS prevention and working with medical personnel and youth in the community. She is primarily interested in learning treatment options for and counseling of individuals with HIV/AIDS in the U.S.

**Ms. Shaiyrgul Ernazarova:** Ms. Ernazarova is the Chief Doctor at the Batken Oblast AIDS Prevention Center where she works on HIV/AIDS prevention education in the community and in the clinical setting. She is interested in understanding epidemiological practices and HIV/AIDS prevention as well as learning how professionals are instructed on such topics. Ms. Ernazarova is also interested in techniques for counseling of people with HIV/AIDS.

**Ms. Aisha Karimahunova:** Ms. Karimahunova, an economics teacher by education, is the youth coordinator of the Issyk-Kul Regional Red Crescent Society where she assesses the needs of Kyrgyz youth and develops youth-focused programs. She is interested in learning how information on HIV/AIDS is disseminated into the public, how U.S. professionals work with sex workers, and treatment techniques for drug addicts and their reintegration into society. She is also interested in services provided to HIV/AIDS infected individuals and their families.

**Ms. Fatima Koshokova:** Ms. Koshokova, trained as a social worker, English and German teacher, is currently the Director of the Social Fund “Rainbow” AIDS Prevention Information Center Among Youth. Previously, she worked with Doctors Without Borders on a program “Preventing HIV/AIDS/STDs Among Young People”. Ms. Koshokova is interested in visiting nonprofits providing services for youth in reproductive and sexual health.

**Ms. Jamila Madalbekova:** Ms. Madalbekova, educated as a pediatrician and a child psychiatrist, is the Director of the Talas Regional Center for Strengthening Health/Alliance for Reproductive Health. She was recently nominated President of the Alliance and a member of a work group on developing a country program on HIV/AIDS prevention and services for young people that is supported by UNICEF and UNFPA. She is interested in learning about counseling strategies for individuals with HIV/AIDS, and prevention and youth-oriented programs.

**Ms. Mairam Tilebalieva:** Ms. Tilebalieva, with a background in psychology and physics, is the president of the Association of Crisis Centers and has conducted research in remote villages on issues related to youth vulnerabilities and access to services. She is interested in visiting a crisis center and learning the differences, if any, in consulting men versus women on HIV/AIDS. Ms. Tilebalieva is also interesting in learning about HIV/AIDS prevention education for school children and how the rights of HIV infected women are upheld.