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PRESS RELEASE

New HospitalsImprove Afghans' Access to Health Services

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN–The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) officially transferred two new hospitals in Paktiya and Paktika provinces to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), which will contribute significantly to better access to healthcare for Afghans living in the region.

The two facilities – a 100-bed hospital in Gardez,Paktiya Provinceand a 20-bed hospital in Zarghun Shar (also known as Khayr Kot) District of Paktika Province – werebuilt by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Afghanistan, with funding from USAID. During a ceremony in Kabul, Minister of Public Health Ferozuddin Feroz accepted the transfer of the hospitals and stressed Afghan government's commitment to maintaining them.

"These hospitals will provide the same level of health care to the people of Paktiya and Paktika and the surrounding provinces as they would get in Kabul or Kandahar," Feroz said. "This is a step toward raising the standard of healthcare across the entire country."

IOM's Construction of Health and Education Facilities (CHEF) team completed the hospitals in late December 2015. Previously, MoPH healthcare workers in Paktiya and Paktika either worked in rented facilities or in over-crowded hospitals that were not adequate for proper attention to patients' needs.

"These hospitals will provide their communities the full gamut of health services from childhood immunization, care for mothers and their newborns, and surgery," said Mission Director Herbie Smith. "And we are grateful for the assistance that IOM provided to build these facilities for the people of Paktiya and Paktika."

Both facilities are built to international structural and medical standards, and will provide healthcare providers the space to more effectively offer quality medical services. They include amenities such as outpatient, emergency and operation facilities, as well asmale and female wards to accommodate patients, educational and administration offices, conference and meeting rooms, laboratories and other services.

"It was rewarding to have USAID and IOM collaborating so closely in Afghanistan to strengthen the capacity of local institutions and to enable the better provision of essential services to the Afghan people," Lawrence Hart, IOM's Afghanistan Chief of Mission and Special Envoy, said of the completed project.

Since January 2008, USAID's $57 million CHEF program has supported Afghanistan's Ministries of Public Health and Education by providing much needed infrastructure in the form of hospitals, midwife training centers, teacher training colleges, and other medical and education facilities.

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The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years."