



Richard G. Farmer, MD: To Russia, with CME

In this issue of the *Journal* we make a temporary departure from our tradition of publishing practical clinical articles to present a paper about the Russian health care system,¹ a case study about a public health nightmare not due to bioterrorism. As we in the United States contemplate the public health problems that confront us—and there are many—we might spend a moment or two counting our blessings. Russia represents a superpower that has let things slide on the home front even worse than we have, with disastrous results, as recounted by Farmer et al.¹ That we are thinking about how to help them, as opposed to how to bomb them into oblivion, seems like progress to me.

This article is interesting, not only because of its content but also because of who wrote it. The first author is Richard G. Farmer, the estimable former chairman of The Cleveland Clinic's Division of Medicine. When the final history of The Cleveland Clinic is written, Farmer's role in upgrading both the practice and the status of medicine at that previously predominantly surgical institution will certainly receive prominent attention. He has always been ahead of his time, and his continued presence in global medicine—bringing continuing medical education programs to Russia—is further evidence of his dedication.

So whether you read the article for intellectual satisfaction or receive inspiration from it to think globally in terms of your own practice, you can rest more comfortably knowing that Dick Farmer is out there slaying health-care dragons under some of the worst imaginable circumstances. We applaud his efforts and we thank him for his article.

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■ REFERENCES

1. Farmer RG, Sirotkin AY, Ziganshina LE, Greenberg HM. The Russian health care system today: Can American-Russian CME programs help? *Cleve Clin J Med* 2003; 70:937-944.