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PIJIP, Kyiv-Mohyla University, and OSI Conclude Intellectual Property Training for Health Advocates – Participants Release Statement on Access to Essential Medicine for Hepatitis C

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KIEV, UKRAINE – At the conclusion of an intellectual property and access to medicines training conducted by PIJIP, Mohyla University, and the Open Society Institute, the participants released a statement calling on Eastern European governments and international organizations to take steps to increase access to generic pegylated interferon for the treatment of Hepatitis C. The statement urges all parties to recognize that high prices have led to a treatment crisis, and to “outline intellectual property, registration and other policy options that can be used to lower prices and increase access to the best available treatments.”

[Click here for a PDF of the statement.](#)

Hepatitis C effects between 150 and 200 million people worldwide, and countries in the Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States have been especially hard hit. Patents on pegylated interferon for the effective treatment of Hepatitis C have resulted in unaffordable monopoly prices and limited access to this important medicine. The Mohyla University training showed health advocates how intellectual property flexibilities permitted by international law can be used to promote access to affordable generic medicines.

"We are thankful to OSI and to Mohyla Academy for the opportunity to expand PIJIP's access to medicines trainings into this new important region," said PIJIP Associate Director Sean Flynn, "The state of global access to HCV treatment today bears many similarities to access to AIDS drugs in the 1990s - a new treatment for a disease affecting marginalized people promises vastly superior health outcomes, but patents encourage a pricing strategy that blocks the poorest countries and populations from access. It may take a similar global health movement to create the political will to respond to this crisis with action to curb intellectual property excesses that are harming health in the region. We hope this training provides the first step."

The training was organized by the American University Washington College of Law Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property (PIJIP), Mohyla University, and the Open Society Institute. Instructors included presentations from legal academics and activists from both the US and the Ukraine –

Sean Flynn (American University), Brook Baker (Northeastern University), Yulia Gordonna (Mohyla University), Peter Maybarduk (Essential Action), Anastasia Mindrul (Mohyla University), Zoriana Skaletska (Mohyla University), and Raminta Stuikyte (Harm Reduction Network). Support for the Initiative has been provided by FOSI, the Open Society Institute, the United Nations Development Fund, the University of Pretoria and Washington College of Law.

For more information on PIJIP's Access to Medicines Legal Training Initiative, see <http://wcl.american.edu/pijip/go/humanrights>

The Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property (PIJIP) at the Washington College of Law promotes public interest approaches to domestic and international intellectual property law through advocacy, events and the provision of legal and consulting services. PIJIP's activities focus on a balanced approach to intellectual property and other legal regimes that reward creators while ensuring broad public access to information and its products.

Foundation Open Society Institute (Zug) is the autonomous Swiss branch of the Open Society Institute. It works to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. To achieve its mission, it seeks to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights in the 21st Century