



U.S. EMBASSY - BAGHDAD

## 2008 Provincial Reconstruction Team News

### -Anbar Province Safe Enough to Host First Health Conference-

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**Ramadi, Iraq** - This city, once a center and byword for violent activity by al Qaeda in Iraq, since the “Surge” of 2007 has become peaceful enough to host the Province’s first ever major health conference. The conference was sponsored, in part, by the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) operating in the region.



Ramadi Health Conference 2008

The Anbar Health Conference was a joint venture between the ePRT in Ramadi and doctors from the local community. EPRTS were established as part of the Surge to work closely with the military on reconstruction and stabilization projects in Anbar and the Baghdad region.

More than 100 Iraqi doctors from the Province attended the conference held in Ramadi July 28-3, including three female doctors from Women’s and Children’s Hospital.

They were joined by American physicians Michael Carey and Patricia Kavanagh, who traveled from New York to lecture and attend patients during their visit. Saleem Khan, a U.S. Navy doctor stationed in Iraq, also participated in the event.

Carey, a neurologist with a Veterans Hospital in New York City, helped perform two brain surgeries along with Iraqi doctors while at the conference. “I found our Iraqi counterparts very knowledgeable, technically excellent and from their reports they’ve done superb neurosurgery,” he said.

“I am amazed that they could do so well with so little equipment. Hopefully their health administration will see to it they become better equipped and the hospital becomes more up-to-date,” Carey added.

At the conference, Doctor Kavanagh, an assistant professor in of Neurology with the State University of New York (SUNY) in Brooklyn, lectured on topics as diverse as treatment of seizures, prenatal care and prevention of stroke.

She also had the opportunity to accompany doctors from Ramadi Women's and Children's Hospital on afternoon rounds. Pointing to the lack of prenatal care and treatment of sick infants in the Province, Kavanagh said, "The consequences are obvious and often manifest themselves years later when they (children) come back to medical attention with conditions that could have been prevented or cured before birth."

The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad also helped out with the conference. Derwint 'Buck' Daniels, a nurse practitioner and Embassy deputy health attaché, helped escort the visiting U.S. doctors. He also spoke with Iraqis at Women's and Children's Hospital about some of the health issues they faced.

After listening to a father describe his son's developmental disorders, Daniels said he was able to get information about a special education school in Ramadi for the child. Commenting on his hopes for the future of the Ramadi healthcare system, Daniels said, "We're paving that road as we go along."

Dr. Jamal Ali Kadhum, a dentist and managing member of the Al Anbar Department of Health, said he thought the conference was a success because it joined "different people in the medical field together... facilitating communications between them."

Kadhum, who helped create media messages and sponsored local meetings to promote better public health in the Province, emphasized the need for an annual conference. He stressed "the importance of relationship building not only between Iraqi doctors but with doctors from other countries as well."

Medical papers delivered at the Ramadi conference can be accessed on the Internet at: <http://public.me.com/jra91>.