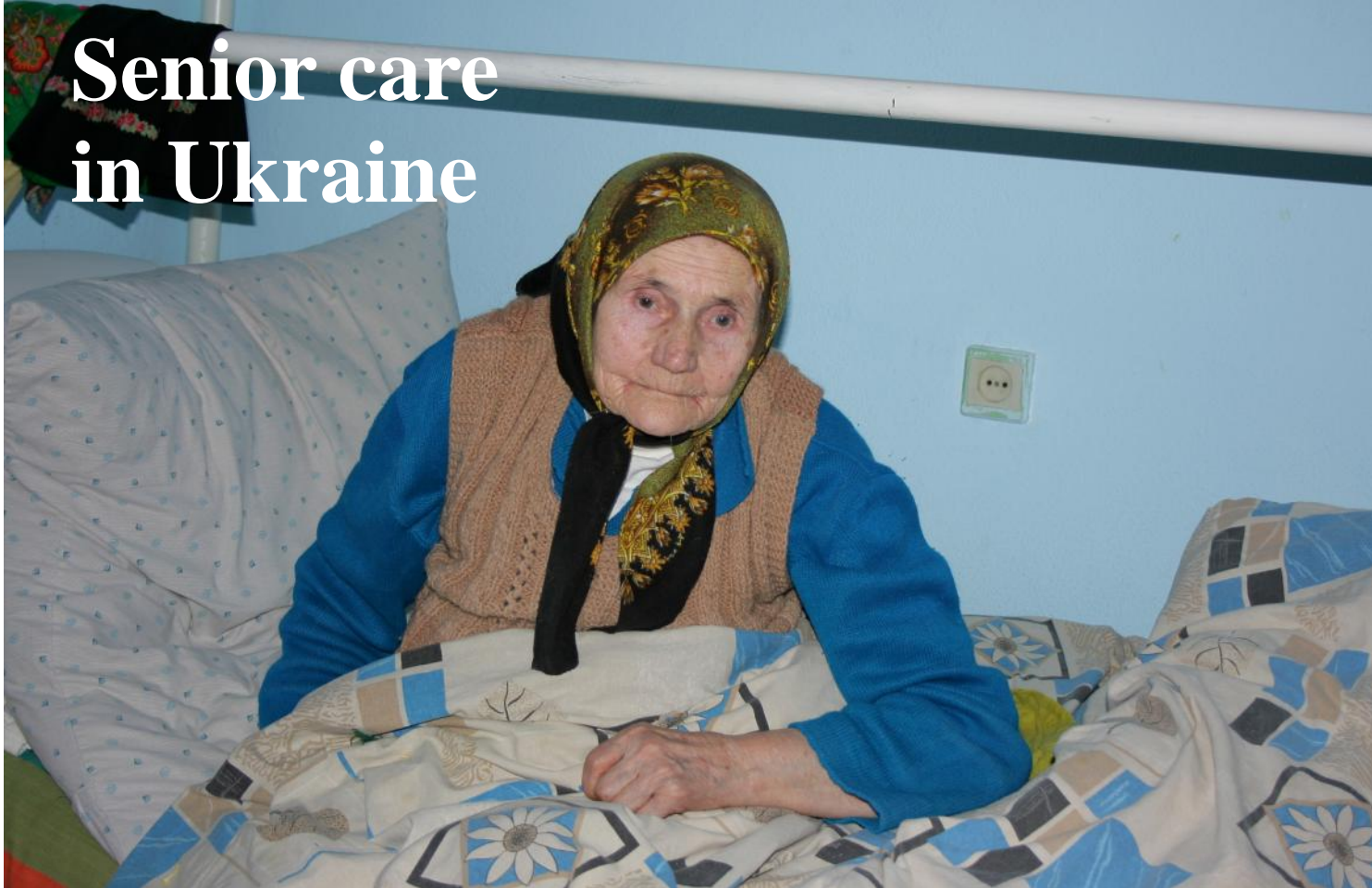


# Senior care in Ukraine



With the aid of two volunteer ministry workers, I was able to slip undetected into one of Ukraine's notorious Pensioner's "homes." The director of this facility was not keen on foreigners observing his facility.

I quickly understood why. The contrast between this facility and the Canadian Senior's Home my grandmothers spent the last years of their life - was shocking.

What awaits pensioners who are forced to leave their homes because of sickness or family circumstances for a government-run facility?

An unimaginable existence in dirty, putrid smelling surroundings; dilapidated old buildings; most often with little or no heat and hot water. Terrible meals. Only promises of medical treatment. Crowded gray-walled rooms shared by four to ten people.

Fear of being beaten by their care-givers is a reality in the lives of these people.

Most facilities haven't even such basic items such as diapers in their budget. The administration of these 'homes' often make matters worse by stealing funds ear-marked for basic supplies and services.

The ministry workers shared with me that when patients complain about their living conditions, the director of this simply retorts: "you are here to die, not to live, so stop your complaining."

Instead of an environment where the eld-

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**...government homes for seniors tragically become prisons where people simply await their death**

erly can happily and peacefully live out the rest of their lives; government homes for seniors tragically become prisons where people simply await their death.

The ministry workers and I made our way from room to room visiting the elderly "Babas," dispensing plenty of hugs, soft candies, conversation and prayer with them. Loving them. Treating them with respect and dignity.

#### **New HART Partner:**

For a few fortunate seniors there are some Christian ministries that look after the elderly. One example is the Pentecostal Holy Trinity Church in Novovolynsk, Ukraine. The Church founded a home for elderly women, most of whom have serious medical difficulties and tragic life stories.

Named Bethesda, it is a place where elderly women, whose spirits and bodies were broken by tragedy, can find refuge.

A Bethesda resident



Over the years a number of women in this center accepted Christ and went on to spend eternity with God.

During the remainder of their lives these elderly women are blessed with a home environment, loving care from Christian workers, supervision 24 hours a day, free medical treatment from volunteer doctors, clothing, 4 meals a day, as well as visits from the pastor and church members.

#### **Greatest needs?** Bethesda's needs include:

- Salaries for its workers
- Food, medical & hygiene supplies

Please keep ministries for Seniors, such as Bethesda in your prayers. 