



NEWS RELEASE

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A Healing Garden Grows in Bhopal ***HCWH Produces Video on Holistic Clinic for Union Carbide Gas Victims***

Health Care Without Harm has filmed and produced its first video for NoHarm Productions™. “A Healing Garden Grows in Bhopal” is the story of the Sambhavna Clinic, a non-profit holistic health clinic in Bhopal, India, built to treat those injured by the Union Carbide toxic gas release in 1984, which killed thousands of people outright. The clinic treats first-and second-generation Bhopal residents who manifest effects of the chemical spill and the continuing poisons that leak from the factory site, now owned by Dow Chemical.

Twenty-five years after the accident, more than 120,000 suffer from health impacts related to their chemical exposure from the gas leak. The abandoned factory site continues to leak chemical wastes into neighborhood wells, poisoning subsequent generations of Bhopal residents. Chemicals such as those leaked by the factory are linked to a wide variety of chronic diseases, including cancer, learning disabilities, birth defects and infertility, which are also being manifested by those in the spill area.

“Bhopal is where the world learned what chemical terror and its aftermath looks like,” stated Gary Cohen, co-executive director of Health Care Without Harm and executive producer of the video. “Amidst this chemical disaster, the Sambhavna Clinic is an oasis of healing.”

The 45 staff members of the Sambhavna Clinic [among whom 23 are survivors themselves] include five physicians, two yoga and two Panchakarma therapists, and five community health workers who carry out health surveys, health education and community organization for better health.

“Sambhavna is the embodiment of what healthcare in the 21st century should be about,” stated Cohen: “free, appropriate scale, integration of the best of western and traditional medicine, and patient centered.” The basic architectural philosophy used in

building the clinic is simple—use local materials and techniques and incorporate local traditions and culture. The result is a model of sustainable healthcare.

In the video, Satinath ‘Sathyu’ Sarangi, a founding trustee of the Sambhavna Clinic, discusses one of the most traditional aspects of the clinic’s treatment: a healing garden. Medicinal plants and herb are grown in the garden, and staff harvest and prepare them for use in treatment of illness. During their visits to the clinic, patients are allowed to dig plants from the clinic’s healing garden to take home to grow. They are given instructions on how to prepare their own treatments from the plants. In some parts of the city, community gardens containing these herbs and plants are shared by residents.

“This clinic sends a powerful message to the people of Bhopal,” stated Bill Ravanese, co-chair of the HCWH Green Building Work Group and producer and director of “A Garden Grows in Bhopal. “Many of the injuries suffered from the toxic spill are debilitating, and would give anyone a reason to despair. Yet, when you see the empowerment that is now being made possible through education and outreach, you feel that hope and opportunity is being provided by this clinic.” The clinic’s name, “Sambhavna,” means “possibility.”

The clinic has gained a reputation for the research it is conducting on long-range impacts of chemical exposure. Its research on second-generation exposures has found that children born to those gassed are shorter, thinner, and lighter than other children and have smaller heads. This research was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Through research into the efficacy of their treatments, the clinicians at Sambhavna are building a model treatment program for those exposed to toxic gas. In addition, the facility has found innovative treatments for asthma through yoga and *pranayama*, an Indian breathing technique to strengthen lung function.

Kumkum M. Dilwali, MS, LEED-AP, Senior Director, Green Guide for Health Care, sings traditional Indian and American songs on the video. “A Healing Garden Grows in Bhopal” will be available on HCWH’s YouTube channel, HCWithoutHarm.

HCWH is an international coalition of more than 430 organizations in 52 countries, working to transform the health care industry worldwide, without compromising patient safety or care, so that it is ecologically sustainable and no longer a source of harm to public health and the environment. For more information on HCWH, see www.noharm.org or visit our YouTube channel, HCwithoutharm. Follow us on twitter: www.twitter.com/hcwithoutharm.

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