

RUSSIAN CHURCH AND MINISTRY OF HEALTH OPEN FREE MEDICAL CENTER FOR HOMELESS IN IRKUTSK



A free medical center for the homeless in Irkutsk was opened and consecrated recently in a joint project between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Ministry of Health.

The new premises, located at a charitable church cafeteria, were consecrated by His Eminence Metropolitan Vadim of Irkutsk and Angarsk, reports the [Synodal Department for Charity and Social Service](#) of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The medical office is stocked with essential medicines, and the homeless will be able to receive free first aid, including for frostbite in the harsh Russian winter. If necessary, the patient will also be examined by a doctor from the emergency room at the local hospital.

In addition to receiving medical help, the homeless can also eat and take a shower at the Irkutsk Diocese's and Irkutsk Province Ministry of Health's collaborative charity. Social workers from the diocese will also help with acquiring the necessary identification and legal documents and getting patients involved in other social

programs in the city. There is also a recreation room on the premises.

“The opening of a medical center in Irkutsk is an important step in building a system of practical medical care for the homeless not only in the Irkutsk Province, but also throughout the country. This event is a practical result of the joint work of the Church and the Ministry of Health and is really of strategic importance. Let’s hope that the example of the Irkutsk Province will spread to other provinces,” said Irina Meshkova, head of the Homeless Assistance Department of the Synodal Charity Department.

Plans are already underway to organize similar medical points in Cheboksary and Khabarovsk.

The Joint Commission of the Church and the Ministry of Health is also providing information to all provinces and hospitals on providing care for the homeless regardless of whether they have identification or health insurance.

The Russian Church operates more than 4,500 social institutions today, including more than 90 homeless shelters, 12 mercy buses, and more than 460 charity cafeterias.

A new “Bus of Mercy” for the homeless was launched [just last month](#) in St. Petersburg.

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