

Case No. 2

Chao Phya Abhaibhubejhr Hospital Foundation

Prachinburi Province, Thailand.

History

It is known as a Prachinburi Hospital when it started operating on June 24, 1941, Chao Phya Abhaibhubejhr Hospital was among the first batch of Thailand's provincial hospitals which opened to serve the public. In 1966 the hospital was renamed Chao Phya Abhaibhubejhr after the title of Chum Abhaiwong, Siam's last Governor of the Khmer region and the man who had majestic colonial-style building later served as the hospitals first ward before a preservation program ended that use. The structure has become the province's landmark and presently houses a museum on Thai traditional medicine.

One of the state medical centers in the eastern region, Chao Phya Abhaibhubejhr Hospital is also known for its *holistic approach* to health care. The hospital has integrated traditional and alternative medical treatments into its standard service system.

Philosophy

The foundation firmly believes that Thai ancient wisdom combined with academic knowledge and a sense of responsibility for the public good will create health care systems which truly improve the well-being of families, communities, society and preserve the environment.

Quick Facts	
Established	1941
Business type	Health care products and Services
Organization Type	Public Hospital & Hospital operated herbal medicines producing unit for profit.
Stakeholders	Farmers (Individual & Groups), Patients, Private Distributors, Ministry of Public Health (Government Agency)
Products and Services	Medicines, Herbal beverages, Cosmetics, Toiletries
Quality Certification	Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP); Organic Agriculture Certification Thailand (ACT), an IFOAM Body.

Why Herbal and Alternative Medicine

Behind the public acceptance of Abhaibhubejhr products is a story of efforts to rediscover traditional wisdom on herbal medicine which began over two decades ago. Troubled by heavy reliance of imported medicines and urged by the World Health Organization (WHO) to promote the use of local resources for health care, the Ministry of Public Health (MPH) then instructed its hospitals to explore traditional alternatives. In response hospital in 1983 initiated a program to bring back herbal use. Through research on lore and numerous pharmacist team found a wealth of knowledge on practices and the use of plants. That

information provided groundwork for developing plant-based medicines for use in the hospital.

Responding to the Crisis and Creating New Opportunities for Local Communities

The economic crisis in the year 1997-98 proved to be a catalyst for change for the nation and Chao Phya Abhaibhubejhr as well. Looking for ways to help local communities to cope with economic hardship, the hospital found an answer in producing herbal products to sell to the public at affordable prices. Exemplifying an enterprise striving for the nation's self-reliance the project relied mainly on local resources including plant materials supplied by local farmers. Guaranteed and higher prices paid for their herbs provided incentives for them to convert to organic farming.

Production

Production Efficiency: The production plant has daily capacity to turn out 500,000 herbal capsules, 2,000 tea sachets, 5,000 bottles of beverages, and 3,000 items of personal care products.

Quality Control: At Abhaibhubejhr quality starts at farm. The entire process of planting, harvesting and processing is certified by Organic Agriculture Certification Thailand (ACT), an IFOAM-accredited body. Additionally, supplying farms are subject to inspection under rigorous lab tests including thin layer Chromatography and High Performance Liquid Chromatography to check their marker substance, potency and

consistency. The plant has a microbial unit to detect contamination.

Research and Development: In the R&D unit pharmacist and technicians with expertise in their work together to develop herbal products from knowledge gained from traditional sources and supported by scientific research.

Social and Environmental Commitments

Community Involvement and Fair Trade: Abhaibhubejhr encourages local community organizations and farmer groups to strengthen their capacity in management and improving quality of life for their members. Abhaibhubejhr buys plant materials directly from the farmers. Volumes, quality and pricing are determined together for fairness.

Healing Mother Nature: Using organically grown materials is Abhaibhubejhr's key policy to guarantee that the cultivation process is ecologically sound and safe for farmers and consumers alike. Through organic farming the environment and soil fertility would be restored.



Passing on Herbal Wisdom:

Abhaibhubejhr has profound appreciation and gratitude for herbals, who are bearers of ancient wisdom on herbal use. To preserve this knowledge, Abhaibhubejhr has organized activities to pass it on to the younger generations.

Forest Preservation: Abhaibhubejhr has been involved in various activities including seminars, public campaigns and youth camps aimed to preserve Khao Yai National Park, a World Heritage site.

Youth Development: To instill environmental and social awareness, sacrifice and team spirit among the young, Abhaibhubejhr has organized programs and conventions for children and young people.

Key Learning Objectives

- Value Chain and Value Addition of Herbal Products
- Contract Farming for raw material
- Economic Empowerment of Farming Community



Photo: Chao Phya Abhaibhubejhr Foundation Hospital, Prachinburi, Thailand.

Source: www.abhaiherb.com