



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

Regional Committee for Europe

66th session

Copenhagen, Denmark, 12–15 September 2016

EUR/RC66/R10

14 September 2016

160771

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Resolution

Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region

The Regional Committee,

Having considered the Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region;¹

Recognizing the importance of tackling viral hepatitis within the framework of Health 2020 – the European policy framework,² adopted in resolution EUR/RC62/R4 in 2012, to improve health and well-being in the Region and to reduce health inequalities;

Noting Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,³ and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG target 3.3 (AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, neglected tropical diseases, hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases) of SDG3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) specifically calling for combatting viral hepatitis;

¹ Document EUR/RC66/10.

² Document EUR/RC62/9.

³ United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1.

Recalling resolutions WHA63.18 in 2010 and WHA67.6 in 2014 on viral hepatitis and resolution WHA69.22 in 2016 adopting the Global health sector strategies on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections, for the period 2016–2021, which requests Member States to strengthen national prevention and control programmes for viral hepatitis adapted to national priorities, legislation and specific contexts and also calls for improved public awareness;

Reaffirming resolution EUR/RC64/R5 adopting the European Vaccine Action Plan 2015–2020⁴ in 2014 with its goal 3 to control hepatitis B infection through immunization, and resolution EUR/RC62/R5 endorsing the European Action Plan for Strengthening Public Health Capacities and Services⁵ in 2012;

Acknowledging the concurrent development of the Action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in the WHO European Region, the Action plan for sexual and reproductive health: towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Europe – leaving no one behind, the Strategy on women’s health and well-being in the WHO European Region and the Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region;⁶

Concerned that viral hepatitis, with increasing chronic viral hepatitis-related liver diseases, is a serious public health burden in the European Region that has not been addressed adequately;

Acknowledging that the challenges in developing quality-assured, laboratory-supported surveillance systems for viral hepatitis lead to low rates of detection and that the high cost of diagnostics and medicines for treatment of hepatitis B and C infection hampers equal access to services across the Region;

Concerned that viral hepatitis disproportionately affects specific at-risk populations who experience barriers to accessing health services, that access to comprehensive prevention and harm reduction services for people who inject drugs is

⁴ Document EUR/RC64/15 Rev.1.

⁵ Document EUR/RC62/12 Rev.1.

⁶ Documents EUR/RC66/11, EUR/RC66/13, EUR/RC66/14 and EUR/RC66/9.

limited in some countries, and that challenges persist in the prevention of health-care associated infections in several Member States;

Understanding that this resolution does not replace any existing Regional Committee resolutions;

1. ADOPTS the Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region, with its goals and targets;
2. URGES Member States:⁷
 - (a) to align, as appropriate, their national viral hepatitis strategies and action plans with the Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region, ensuring political commitment and resources required to combat the viral hepatitis epidemics;
 - (b) to strengthen public health systems for comprehensive viral hepatitis prevention and control interventions with a particular focus on: strengthening strategic information, including laboratory-supported surveillance; providing universal childhood hepatitis B immunization and increasing the rate of hepatitis B vaccination; and scaling up testing and treatment through sustained and affordable systems for diagnostics and treatment of hepatitis B and C;
 - (c) to ensure that prevention, treatment and care programmes target individuals most affected by viral hepatitis and at higher risk of transmission, based on the local epidemiological context;
 - (d) to address regulations and policies as well as discriminatory environments, that prevent access to comprehensive prevention, treatment and care of viral hepatitis;

⁷ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to support the implementation of the Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region by providing leadership, strategic direction and technical guidance to Member States;
- (b) to provide technical support for developing and implementing national action plans for viral hepatitis and support for further development of surveillance systems that will be able to evaluate the burden of and monitor the response to viral hepatitis in Member States;
- (c) to facilitate partnerships with international, regional and national organizations, agencies and all relevant stakeholders in advocating for and scaling up response to viral hepatitis;
- (d) to identify and facilitate the exchange of best practices and experiences among Member States⁷ and to produce evidence-informed tools for an effective response to viral hepatitis;
- (e) to monitor and report progress to the 69th and 72nd sessions of the Regional Committee in 2019 and 2022, respectively, on the implementation of the Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region.

= = =