

# **WHO support for health system development in Ukraine**

**2016–2019**



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# Foreword



WHO has a long history of supporting health system work in Ukraine. Recent collaborative efforts have intensified in a range of areas, including providing support for strategy development, evidence generation and capacity-building; providing policy advice, sharing experiences across countries and institutions, networking and responding to urgent needs. At the same time, Ukraine has prioritized interventions designed to make progress towards universal health coverage and improve health outcomes for the Ukrainian population.

On this journey, strengthening the country's health system is strategically important to create a solid foundation of policies, institutions and actions required to achieve the goals of universal health coverage, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

We have witnessed bold steps in developing a new health financing system focused on primary health care and public health, improving access to medicines and addressing the increasing burden of noncommunicable disease. These efforts have been accompanied by the establishment of new institutions and capacities.

This document is a brief summary of WHO's assistance to Ukraine's leadership over the 2016–2019 period in developing robust, realistic, comprehensive and coherent health policies and strategies, along with the plans needed to translate these into improved performance of the Ukrainian health system. It describes the recent efforts of the WHO Country office in Ukraine, the WHO Regional Office for Europe and WHO headquarters, together with national and international experts. WHO is supporting the ongoing health system transformation in Ukraine through working with many development partners and stakeholders with an active role in the country. On behalf of WHO, I would like to thank all of the partners who have helped us in providing such a broad work package.

There is still much to be done to build consensus and move towards universal health coverage, as well as to shape the roles and enhance the capacities of government institutions and service providers. We look forward to continuing our work with national and international partners to ensure better health for everyone in Ukraine and worldwide.

Jarno Habicht  
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## Acknowledgements

The WHO Country Office in Ukraine would like to thank the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, other national stakeholders and international development partners for their support and collaboration towards improving the health and well-being of the Ukrainian population.

We would like to express our gratitude to the partners that supported WHO in health systems development activities during 2016–2019: the European Union (EU)–Luxembourg–WHO Universal Health Coverage Partnership, the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Government of Germany, the Government of Japan, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the World Bank, as well as others we may have omitted to mention.

WHO also appreciates the efforts of its partners in working together on the activities described in this document, including the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Unitaid, United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Development Programme, the United States Agency for International Development’s SAFEMed Project, United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the WONCA (World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians) International Classification Committee.

# Abbreviations

AMC	antimicrobial medicine consumption
AMR	antimicrobial resistance
BBP	basic benefit package
EMS	emergency medical services
IANPHI	International Association of National Public Health Institutes
ICPC-2	International Classification of Primary Care, second edition
IHR	International Health Regulations (2005)
MIS	medical information system
NHSU	National Health Service of Ukraine
PHC	primary health care
PV	pharmacovigilance
UHC	universal health coverage
UPHC	Public Health Centre of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine
WONCA	World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians







# Introduction

This document presents a brief overview of the key achievements and outcomes to which WHO contributed through selected activities conducted by the WHO Country Office in Ukraine with the aim of strengthening the function of the Ukrainian health system within the framework of the biennial collaborative agreements for 2016–2017 and 2018–2019. The activities were informed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (1), in particular by Sustainable Development Goal 3, to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. They are also interlinked with the three core areas of WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 (2): (i) achieving universal health coverage (UHC), (ii) addressing health emergencies and (iii) promoting healthier populations. The activities cover four main areas, which are presented in separate sections:

1. national health policies, strategies and plans
2. people-centred health services and health workforce
3. access to medicines and other health technologies
4. health systems, information and evidence.

Each section comprises a general introduction with bullet points covering the key areas of work and panels listing events that took place during the 2016–2017 and 2018–2019 periods that represent a platform or opportunities for knowledge exchange between national and international counterparts.

Implementation of the activities was funded through WHO core resources and funds; voluntary contributions of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Government of Germany, the Government of Japan, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and World Bank; and the European Union (EU)–Luxembourg–WHO Universal Health Coverage Partnership.

This document is a brief summary and may not cover all joint activities that were carried out during the 2016–2017 and 2018–2019 periods. It also does not aim to inform and educate the broader public about health system transformation in Ukraine.



# Strengthening health governance and structuring policy dialogue in Ukraine

WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health of Ukraine to build its governance capacity to lead the process of health system transformation and, most importantly, steer the development of health policies to improve the health and well-being of the population, reduce health inequalities, strengthen public health services and ensure a people-centred health system that is universal, equitable, sustainable and of high quality. The work of the Ministry of Health was guided by Health 2020 agenda (4) and used a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

The key areas of work and subsequent achievements are as follows.

- Following extensive consultation with the Ukrainian Government and international partners and with technical guidance from WHO, the Ministry of Health successfully finalized concept papers on health financing (5), public health (6) and mental health (7), and these were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.
- With strategic support from WHO, the Ministry of Health convened a number of high-level policy dialogue meetings aimed at creating a national partnership to reform the national health sector.
- WHO is actively advising the Ministry of Health to adopt a steer-and-negotiate approach to address the problems of the entire health sector in government policies. A new Law on State Financial Guarantees for the Provision of Medical Services (8) was passed by the Parliament of Ukraine in 2017, together with a package of related by-laws. This set of documents has created a strong legal and political framework to implement new health financing arrangements. A new state-guaranteed benefit package is under development. Additionally, the regulations for primary health service providers have been revised to expand their role and capacity for health-care provision, in line with WHO recommendations.
- WHO is supporting the institutionalization of a new public health legal framework in Ukraine by providing support and technical assistance to draft a new law on public health. WHO consultants are also providing guidance on evaluating Ukraine's regulations for health (sanitary) protection, implementing the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) (9) and implementing disease surveillance. The strategy for developing a surveillance system for communicable diseases and a laboratory network by 2020 has been reviewed.
- One of the recent activities of WHO included a comprehensive mapping of health system governance, which provided the Ministry of Health with valuable information for the further development of an accountability and governance framework.

## Key policy documents developed

**Concept Paper on Health Financing (5), Law on state financial guarantees for health care (8) and related by-laws**

**Ministry of Health Order on primary health care (PHC) provision (10)**

**Concept paper and draft legislation on public health (6)**

**Concept paper and draft action plan on mental health (7)**

# Coordinated international support for health system strengthening in Ukraine

To achieve the goals of its ambitious, large-scale plan for health system transformation, the Government of Ukraine is making progress with multiple national stakeholders, public and private organizations, and international and development organizations involved in the health-care sector on bringing coherence and alignment to its health systems.

WHO supported the health development agenda in Ukraine through fostering information exchange, coordination and alignment between the development partners. WHO also supported the Ministry of Health to provide leadership on policy dialogue to ensure a cross-cutting approach to health sector regulation and build national partnerships in all health-related areas among national and international partners through the following actions.

- WHO co-organized and facilitated a number of high-level, multipartner meetings on donor coordination, thus providing opportunities for different agencies to identify their priorities through the consultation process, harmonize their working methods and intensify their aligned efforts to support the national health planning processes.
- WHO regularly provides networking opportunities between Ukraine and international health communities, fosters links with reputable international institutions and associations, and supports and advocates for the participation of Ukrainian delegates in key international health events.
- As a result of WHO advocacy support, the Public Health Centre of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (UPHC) became a full member of the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI). To maintain momentum in this area, WHO and the Ministry of Health hosted the 2017 IANPHI Europe National Public Health Institute Director's Annual Meeting in Ukraine, which led to the establishment of a multicountry peer network to lead the development of national public health institutes through merger processes in the context of large-scale public health reforms, which also included Member States that wish to work towards IANPHI membership.
- WHO supported the Ukrainian Government in its political commitment to become a partner of the UHC2030 global movement (11). On behalf of Ukraine, the acting Minister of Health signed the UHC2030 *Global Compact for Progress towards Universal Health Coverage* (12) at the seventy-second World Health Assembly in May 2019.
- WHO took the lead in convening an all-partners meeting in August 2019 to foster dialogue among development partners on how the international community can further support Ukraine in its efforts to improve the health of its population.

# New health financing principles

With the aim of improving access to good-quality health services and increase financial protection for its population, Ukraine adopted the Law on State Financial Guarantees for the Provision of Medical Services.

The key areas of work and subsequent achievements are as follows.

- In a joint mission in 2016, WHO took the lead in issuing a joint statement with other development partners in support of the proposed health-care reforms in Ukraine. The statement was presented during a high-level policy event to start the process of health system transformation in the country.
- WHO organized and facilitated a number of technical missions (including a joint EU–WHO mission) to exchange knowledge on health system reforms, provide assistance and conduct technical seminars on drafting legislation on new health financing approaches.
- WHO contracted and guided consultants to support the Ministry of Health at all stages of drafting and gaining approval for the Concept Paper on Health Financing (5), which was adopted by Cabinet of Ministers in November 2016. The Concept Paper represents the first step in developing and approving new legislation on health financing.
- WHO and the consultants provided technical assistance in drafting the Law on State Financial Guarantees for the Provision of Medical Services (8), which was adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament in October 2017. WHO also guided the consultants in reviewing the subsidiary regulations for implementing the Law.
- A high-level multipartner meeting was organized by WHO and the World Bank in May 2019 to analyse and document the progress made three years after the launch of health financing reforms intended to catalyse health system transformation in Ukraine.

## Events in 2016–2017

Three missions to support health financing legislation, establishment of the National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU) (14) and development of a basic benefit package (BBP)

One WHO Barcelona health financing course in 2017, which was attended by four Ministry of Health experts

One UHC course in Kyrgyzstan, which was attended by seven Ministry of Health experts

WHO organized and facilitated a number of webinars on introducing a benefit package, which were attended by seven Ministry of Health experts

**Upon its independence, Ukraine inherited a centralized Semashko model of health care. Under this model, the Ukrainian Government guaranteed free health care for all citizens but in reality could not sustain its extensive infrastructure of inefficient hospitals and did not have the tools for quality control of the services delivered. According to some estimates, the proportion of out-of-pocket payments was more than 50% (13). In 2016 the new Minister of Health continued implementing a number of key strategies and frameworks developed in 2015.**

**With strategic support from WHO, the Ministry of Health convened a high-level policy dialogue chaired by the Prime Minister to launch a massive national campaign to reform Ukraine's health sector. To further coordinate and align the efforts of the development partners, WHO provided leadership in preparing, signing and presenting the joint statement by the international community that expressed its full support for the Ministry of Health's health reform processes.**

# Ensuring financial protection

## Events in 2018–2019

10 missions to support health financing transformation in Ukraine

Two executive seminars hosted by the WHO Barcelona Office for Health Systems Strengthening to discuss directions and innovations among key policy-makers

One high-level ministerial visit to Estonia, which was attended by nine representatives of the Ministry of Health

Two Barcelona health financing courses (in 2018 and 2019), which was attended by eight Ministry of Health and NHSU experts

One strategic planning seminar on health system strengthening and health financing activities in Ukraine, which was attended by three participants

Following the adoption of the new Law on State Financial Guarantees for the Provision of Medical Services (8) in 2017, the Government of Ukraine established the NHSU as a new central executive body with a strategic role in the new models of purchasing health services. WHO assisted this newly established agency to build capacity and take the lead role in contracting health service providers through the following actions.

- WHO organized several technical missions to support the establishment of the NHSU and the design of the benefit package, and also advised on the development of subsidiary regulations for the establishment and operation of the NHSU.
- WHO supported the development of the design for the contracting procedures and requirements for PHC providers.
- WHO organized and provided technical support for senior Ministry of Health officials to undertake a study tour to Estonia on health financing and management, the structure of the Estonian Health Insurance Fund, and the development of the benefit package and contracting procedures. The study tour gave the officials a greater understanding of how the new for Ukraine model of purchasing health services works in European countries.

**NHSU contracting mechanisms and procedures have been in place since 2018. In all, 98% of PHC providers have signed contracts with the NHSU and received their first payments based on the actual number of citizens enrolled. WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health and NHSU to develop an explicit BBP for Ukraine. WHO consultants created a policy options paper for introducing a Government-guaranteed BBP in Ukraine and organized a strategic seminar on developing the BBP and payment rates, which assisted the Ministry of Health and NHSU to define their approaches and strategic priorities for a future programme of state guarantees for health care.**

WHO conducted an assessment of the financial costs of health care in Ukraine and published a report, *Can People Afford to Pay for Health Care?: New Evidence on Financial Protection in Ukraine*

To equip the national health authorities with appropriate tools and credible data on health expenditure, WHO conducted a number of studies on the financial costs of health care in Ukraine. For this, WHO assessed the amounts, patterns and causes of expenditure on different types of health-care services at the national and regional levels in Ukraine and in 2018 published a report on financial protection entitled *Can People Afford to Pay for Health Care?: New Evidence on Financial Protection in Ukraine* (13). The study provides baseline data on financial protection in Ukraine and can be used to monitor the impact and effectiveness of ongoing health-care reforms.

# PEOPLE-CENTRED HEALTH SERVICES AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: improving access to good-quality essential health services



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A key component of health-care reform is developing integrated service delivery mechanisms that encourage a continuum of care across different health conditions and levels of care. Additionally, to ensure that all Ukrainians have access to good-quality essential health services over the lifespan (including health promotion, disease prevention, curative, rehabilitation and palliative care services), the current model of service provision is being re-examined, with a special focus on balancing the provision of health promotion and disease prevention services in the light of national public health priorities.

# Strengthening public health service capacities

## Events in 2016–2017

One mission on priority-setting for public health system development

One joint EU–WHO mission on public health system strengthening

Two missions on human resources for the public health laboratory network

Seven missions on organizational development of the public health system

Three missions on developing an epidemiological surveillance strategy

One workshop on Women and leadership in public health, which was attended by 22 Ministry of Health participants

Two workload staffing needs assessment training courses, which were attended by 75 Ministry of Health participants

Four seminars on Communicable disease epidemiological surveillance and preparedness, which were attended by 135 Ministry of Health participants

One European Public Health Conference and two high-level meetings of the Coalition of Partners to Strengthen Public Health Services and Capacities in the European Region, which were attended by five Ministry of Health senior staff members

WHO is providing technical knowledge and expertise to help Ukraine build a resilient public health system with strong health promotion and disease prevention policies aligned with international standards. WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health to train health-care personnel in the use of up-to-date technologies to detect, investigate and contain threats to public health security, thereby making an important contribution to international strategies for disease control and management.

The key areas of work and subsequent achievements are as follows.

- WHO supported the establishment and operation of the Ministry of Health's Steering Committee on Public Health System Development and coordinated the multipartner work of three thematic task forces operating under the Steering Committee during 2016–2017. Further targeted support in prioritized technical areas was provided from 2018 to 2019.
- WHO supported the institutionalization of a new public health legal framework in Ukraine by providing technical assistance to develop the Concept Paper on Public Health, which was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in November 2016, and to draft new legislation on the public health system.
- WHO provided the Ministry of Health with recommendations for a list of priority diseases of public health concern and a strategy for developing a surveillance system for communicable diseases, including a laboratory network by 2020 to comply with new EU regulations that came into effect in 2018.
- WHO provided guidance on the finalization of educational standards and a masters programme for public health professionals and facilitated consultations and advisory meetings with different European partners. These will enable Ukraine to develop a new public health workforce aligned with transformation of the health service delivery system.
- WHO is also providing guidance on the evaluation of Ukraine's regulations for health protection, on IHR (2005) implementation and on disease surveillance.
- WHO conducted an initial analysis for optimization of human resources in Ukraine's public health laboratory system, and the findings are being implemented in a pilot project in the Chernivtsi region.
- WHO supported the Government of Ukraine to develop the National action plan on health adaptation to climate changes<sup>1</sup> to address the global environmental implications for health policy. WHO consultants drafted and reviewed a policy document on the effects of long-term exposure to radon, and supported the Ministry of Health to organize the roundtable meeting entitled Environment and health (15) and to plan a national consultation on the impact of air pollution on health.

<sup>1</sup> Working document.



# Enhancing the leadership role of the UPHC

WHO advised on organizational, procedural and technical matters related to the operation of the UPHC and provided input to Ministry of Health orders on the process of public health reform implementation to ensure that the full spectrum of essential, high-quality public health services are available to the population. WHO supported UPHC capacity-building through the following actions.

- WHO provided guidance on drafting of the UPHC's human resources policy, including the adopted Code of Corporate Ethics (16).
- WHO consultants made recommendations on the organizational structure of both the UPHC and regional public health centres and gave continuous support for this process by helping to define the core functions of the UPHC and by facilitating discussions on the distribution of functions and work between the Ministry of Health, the UPHC and regional public health centres.
- WHO helped to design basic courses on public health for national specialists, including workshops on the management and monitoring of programmes and projects, and a five-module workshop on Leadership and governance in the UPHC.
- WHO is supporting the UPHC to develop guidance documents for the creation of educational public health programmes at regional (*oblast*) level.
- WHO developed draft methodology for the UPHC on reviewing the best European practices in public health.
- WHO drafted a Concept Paper on the Development and Functioning of Regional Schools of Health<sup>2</sup> and submitted it to the Ministry of Health and the UPHC.
- In collaboration with a contracted consultant, WHO provided support in drafting the Concept Paper on the Communication Strategy on Public Health Priorities.<sup>3</sup>

## Events in 2018–2019

One joint WHO–CDC<sup>4</sup>–IANPHI mission to assess the stages of development of key corporate functions of the UPHC

Two missions to support a review of core public health functions and competencies, in collaboration with the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and IANPHI

Two missions on improving public health laboratory services

One mission on strengthening policies on health adaptation to climate change

One European Public Health Conference and two high-level meetings of the Coalition of Partners to Strengthen Public Health Services and Capacities in the European Region, which were attended by four nominated participants of the UPHC

Global and European IANPHI meetings and joint WHO–IANPHI workshops, which were attended by four nominated participants of the UPHC

One study tour to the French Public Health Agency (20), which was organized for two Ministry of Health and four UPHC representatives

One basic course on public health principles, which was delivered to 200 UPHC employees

Workshops on managing and monitoring programmes and projects, which were attended by 26 technical and administrative UPHC staff

A five-module workshop on Leadership and governance, which was attended by 37 senior UPHC staff

After Ukraine declared its intention to join the EU and ratified the Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement in 2014 (17), a number of clauses in the national legislation had to be approximated to EU regulations. WHO supported the Ukrainian Government to align its health legislation with that of the EU's *acquis*. WHO consultants drafted and reviewed the National action plan for addressing long-term risks from radon exposure (18) as part of adopting Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom on Basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionizing radiation (19). WHO also provided technical assistance to develop new regulations for health (sanitary) protection in Ukraine, in compliance with IHR (2005) provisions (9); blood safety procedures; and an epidemiological surveillance system for communicable diseases, with relevant case definitions in compliance with the new requirements of the adopted EU regulation.

<sup>2,3</sup> Unpublished document.

<sup>4</sup> CDC: United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

# An effective PHC network

## Events in 2016–2017

One technical mission on PHC decentralization and financing mechanisms

One technical mission, workshop and country coordination meeting on quality of care

Workshop on primary health care performance in the context of changing health needs (21), which was attended by two Ukrainian delegates

WONCA Global Family Doctors Association Annual Conference, which was attended by two Ministry of Health experts

## Events in 2018–2019

Three missions to support the elaboration of regulations on the PHC provision model

WHO provided support for Ukrainian delegates to participate in the Cross-programmatic consultation on the role of primary health care in the responsible use of medicines and reduction of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) (22) and in the Commonwealth of Independent States conference: crossroad of policy, research, education and practice in primary health care (23)

As well as improving its approach to health financing, the Ukrainian Government made efforts toward developing its health service delivery networks based on close-to-client primary care providers – public or private – backed up by a rapid emergency medical services (EMS) response, integrated hospital and specialized services.

WHO supported the Ministry of Health to develop modalities for organizing an effective people-centred network of PHC providers through the following actions.

- WHO reviewed and finalized an operations manual for PHC reform (10) and contributed to the development of guiding principles for the provision of PHC services, including a list of required PHC equipment; telemedicine in PHC; referrals from PHC; and models for out-of-hours PHC provision, examination of temporary disability and providing sick leave certificates.
- WHO provided support to implement the International Classification of Primary Care, second edition (ICPC-2) in Ukraine, and contracted a provider to develop an ICPC-2 simulator for training PHC specialists to better understand and use the ICPC-2 in their daily practice.
- WHO consultants reviewed and analysed the existing reporting forms in PHC and made recommendations for their optimization.
- WHO facilitated Ministry of Health liaison with and the subsequent inclusion of Ukraine into a global network of PHC specialists, WONCA (World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians), and co-organized and co-facilitated the WICC (WONCA International Classification Committee) annual meeting, which took place in Ukraine in August 2018.

**Adoption of the Law on State Financial Guarantees for the Provision of Medical Services (8) in 2017 allowed Ukrainians to freely choose PHC providers for health service delivery. As a result of a nationwide campaign to contract PHC providers, over 60% of the population signed a declaration (a form of service agreement) with a specific PHC provider. In parallel, the roles and capacities of PHC providers are being enhanced in line with WHO recommendations. Additionally, the so-called money-will-follow-patient principle provides health professionals with a direct incentive to provide good-quality services to patients.**

# Human resources for health

The Government of Ukraine has declared that improvement in the health of the population will be achieved in part through a well-performing health and public health workforce that is competent, available, responsive and productive.

WHO supported the Ministry of Health in managing its dynamic health-care labour market and improving the distribution and performance of existing health workers through the following actions.

- WHO organized a strategic session on human resources for health with the participation of senior representatives of the Ministry of Health and the WHO Regional Office for Europe. Following extensive consultations, WHO reviewed the Concept Paper on Licensing of Health Care Professionals (24), which was prepared by the Ministry of Health in 2018.
- In 2017 WHO provided support to the Ministry of Health to finalize the calculation of the human resources needs for public health services.
- The Ministry of Health and UPHC led the process of improving the qualifications of the national public health workforce and, following WHO-facilitated consultations and advisory meetings with different European partners, new professional and educational standards were approved.
- WHO supported the redesign of EMS training programmes to produce the full spectrum of health workers needed to deliver timely, good-quality EMS and facilitated a number of national and regional stakeholder meetings to build consensus on EMS reform.
- WHO supported the Ministry of Health's efforts to improve the qualifications of and broaden the functions of middle-level medical personnel by providing organizational and technical support to organize two national consultations of nurses (Reforming nursing in healthcare in Ukraine: education of middle-level medical personnel), which took place in March 2018 and June 2019 in Kyiv (25).

## Events in 2016–2017

The Fourth Global Human Resources for Health Forum in Dublin, Ireland was attended by two Ministry of Health experts

## Events in 2018–2019

Two missions on health workforce development

One high-level workshop on human resources for health

One study tour to Finland for three Ministry of Health experts was organized to share experiences in medical education improvement

Three international events on developing the role of nurses and on health workforce accounts, which were attended by three Ministry of Health representatives

The World Federation of Medical Education Conference, 7–10 April 2019, Seoul, South Korea, was attended by two senior Ministry of Health representatives

# Designing efficient health service delivery models

## Events in 2016–2017

Three missions to assess rehabilitation and EMS practices

One study trip to Israel and two Thematic International Conferences on rehabilitation, which were attended by five Ministry of Health experts

The Ninth meeting of the WHO mhGAP<sup>5</sup> Forum, 2017, Geneva, Switzerland, which was attended by one Ministry of Health expert

Two EMS conferences (in Israel and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), which were attended by four Ministry of Health representatives

## Events in 2018–2019

Five missions to discuss and develop health service delivery models

One mission on EMS, followed by a study tour to Estonia on ambulance care, in which nine Ministry of Health experts participated

One mission to support the elaboration of financing mechanisms for mental health services

Two missions to introduce a four-year programme on rehabilitation and assistive technology, followed by one scoping visit to Lviv and the participation of one representative from Ukraine in a global meeting on rehabilitation at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland

One of the key priorities of the extensive health-care reforms led by the Ministry of Health is transformation of the health service delivery model to encompass public health, PHC and EMS, including improving the health outcomes of patients with communicable and noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions.

WHO is providing technical support to the Ministry of Health and NHSU to improve the quality of health service delivery through the following actions.

- Together with the Ministry of Health, WHO organized over 10 workshops and provided technical expertise on policy options for implementing high-quality people-centred, integrated health services that will result in a White Paper on Service Delivery to be submitted for consideration by the Ministry of Health in 2019.
- Together with national partners, WHO is designing a number of training courses on improving the skills and knowledge of Ministry of Health and NHSU staff on health service delivery and its governance, accountability and coordination of care.
- Nationwide reforms to improve the quality of emergency care were initiated, followed by two rounds of WHO-led assessments on existing EMS knowledge, skills and work patterns. WHO is also facilitating national discussions among heads of EMS centres on the results of the assessments and on proposed changes to national EMS policy.
- WHO provided technical assistance to review the Concept Paper on Reforming the Emergency Medical System (26), which was approved in May 2019, and based on the proposed approach produced a policy options paper on possible financing models for EMS.
- In support of Ministry of Health efforts to adopt evidence-based treatment guidelines, WHO helped identify the 100 most relevant Duodecim Evidence-based Medicine Guidelines for PHC, facilitated the translation process and made suggestions for contextualization of the National Association of State EMS Officials' Model EMS Clinical Guidelines for the Pre-hospital Level (27) and the mhGAP Intervention Guide (28) to the local health-care model.
- WHO conducted an initial assessment of the national disability, health and rehabilitation system in 2016, followed by recommendations for additional activities to scale up rehabilitation and assistive technology in Ukraine under the WHO Regional Office for Europe's four-year initiative on rehabilitation.

<sup>5</sup> Mental Health Gap Action Programme.

# ACCESS TO MEDICINES AND OTHER HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES: ensuring scientifically sound and cost-effective population coverage

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In line with the ongoing health system reform, the Government of Ukraine is conducting activities to ensure equitable access to essential medical products, vaccines and technologies of assured quality, safety and efficacy for the population. Additionally, the Ministry of Health is leading the process of harmonizing national legislation in pharmaceuticals areas; strengthening capacity in quality assurance; promoting a pharmacovigilance (PV) system (29); and ensuring the public procurement of safe, affordable, effective medicines.

# Health technologies and pharmaceuticals

## Events in 2016–2017

One joint UNDP–UNICEF–WHO<sup>8</sup> mission on health procurement reform

One preparatory mission on AMR issues

One joint EU–WHO technical mission on national medicines policy

10 thematic international events, conferences and workshops, which were attended by more than 20 national staff from the Ukrainian regulatory authorities

## Events in 2018–2019

One mission on smart safety surveillance principles and enhancing the PV system

One mission on revising the national Essential Medicines List (39) and evaluating the development progress of the Health Technology Assessment Department of the State Expert Centre of the Ministry of Health

Two missions to assess the Affordable Medicines Programme

One joint WHO–Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations mission to review the development of the National Action Plan for Combating Resistance to Antimicrobial Agents

20 international events on marketing authorization, regulation, strategic procurement, good manufacturing practice and quality control, which were attended by 40 national staff from the Ukrainian regulatory authorities

In working towards UHC for all citizens, the Ukrainian Government is working toward ensuring sustainable access to good-quality, efficient and safe medicines and medical devices. WHO supported this multidirectional work, in cooperation with other partners with expertise in the field, to ensure the harmonization of medical regulation and safety standards, improved procurement procedures, information exchange and knowledge transfer through the following actions.

- WHO provided technical advice to the Ministry of Health for harmonizing Ukrainian pharmaceutical practices with the best international standards by supporting the development of and reviewing a number of national regulatory documents, including the Law of Ukraine on Medicines (30). In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, WHO analysed the existing intellectual property rights legislation<sup>6</sup> to ensure that all of the flexibility provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (33) are incorporated into national legislation.
- WHO supported the Ministry of Health to organize and facilitate a number of technical workshops and international meetings, including high-level meetings on intellectual property rights and patent transparency promotion, and on post-market surveillance of in vitro diagnostic tests for providers and regulators.
- WHO supported the Ministry of Health and national counterparts (i.e. the National State Medicines Agency, State Expert Centre, NHSU) in designing the outpatient medicines reimbursement scheme, which later became known as the Affordable Medicines Programme (34). At the request of the Ministry of Health, WHO conducted an assessment and made recommendations to further expand the programme (more detail is given in the text box on p.15). To further strengthen the collaboration to provide affordable medicines, WHO arranged for Ukrainian delegates to participate in three Summer Schools and one Winter School on pharmaceutical pricing and reimbursement policies,<sup>7</sup> in addition to three Commonwealth of Independent States Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Information network meetings, which helped Ukrainian policy-makers to develop regulatory initiatives to improve access to pharmaceutical products and reduce out-of-pocket expenditure on medicines.
- WHO improved the knowledge and competencies of the national antimicrobial medicine consumption (AMC) focal point by supporting their participation in annual meetings of the WHO AMC Network (35), with a focus on antimicrobial stewardship activities.

<sup>6</sup> The two main documents are the Civic code of Ukraine and Law of Ukraine on protection of rights to inventions and utility models (31,32).

<sup>7</sup> The Summer School on pharmaceuticals pricing and reimbursement policies, 23–27 July, 2018, Vienna, Austria; Summer School on pharmaceutical pricing and reimbursement policies, Vienna, Austria, 28 August–1 September 2017; and Winter School on pharmaceutical pricing and reimbursement policies, 18–20 February 2019.

<sup>8</sup> UNDP: United Nations Development Programme; UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund.

- WHO consultants reviewed the National Action Plan for Combating Resistance to Antimicrobial Agents (36) and convened regular working discussions with the national coordinators on issues of AMR and AMC focal points in Ukraine to align and monitor progress on approval of the Strategy and development of the Operational plan for the national action plan for combating resistance to antimicrobial agents.<sup>9</sup> WHO also prepared and disseminated a promotional video on the responsible use of antibiotics (also known as the Doctor's rap). In 2019 WHO is continuing its efforts to organize a technical consultation on creating a systematic approach to monitor AMR issues and foster the involvement of human, animal and agricultural sectors in the process.
- WHO provided technical advice and training to national authorities on strengthening their PV systems and PV preparedness. The WHO Safety and Vigilance team (WHO headquarters) and the WHO Country Office in Ukraine jointly organized a mission on the assessment of PV practices for new drugs and introduction of the smart safety surveillance (known as 3S) principles to enhance the national PV system, using bedaquiline as the pathway.
- WHO supported the Ministry of Health and national counterparts to strengthen their capacities in strategic procurement practices by supporting the participation of Ukrainian health authorities in a number of international training courses and knowledge exchange forums on procurement and negotiations, as well as by assessing the current process of medicine selection for public procurement.
- In April 2019 WHO conducted a survey to obtain information about the current state of assistive technology in Ukraine. Based on the data obtained, a policy for access to assistive technology will be developed within the scope of the WHO Regional Office for Europe's four-year initiative on rehabilitation.

**In April 2017 the Government of Ukraine made significant progress on its path toward UHC when it approved the new Affordable Medicines Programme for outpatient medicines reimbursement (37,38). Previously, no system had been in place for public reimbursement of prescription medicines in the outpatient sector and spending on medicines was reported to be the main driver of financial hardship for Ukrainian households. To support the launch of this initiative, WHO reviewed and funded the production of materials to raise awareness about the Programme.**

**Since its introduction, the Programme has contributed to a significant increase in access to medicines and is gradually becoming a regular component of the new health benefit package. At the request of the Ministry of Health, WHO conducted an evaluation of this government-funded initiative and provided recommendations to increase the uptake of the Programme to ensure wider geographical coverage and further reduce out-of-pocket payments for population groups that require essential medications. To continue this approach, discussion is currently underway on the possibility of WHO conducting a review of Ukraine's essential medicines list (39).**

<sup>9</sup> Working document.

# HEALTH SYSTEMS, INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE: ensuring informed decision-making in the health sector



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The Government of Ukraine has placed great emphasis on digital solutions to obtaining reliable health information for making informed decisions and policies. An e-health system was established to produce and analyse information on financial risk protection, equity and health expenditure, and is used to track the progress of the ongoing health system transformation. Efforts were made to transform national public health research approaches and strategic alliances were established with international research networks.



# Ensuring the quality of health data

The Government of Ukraine, in close collaboration with national medical information system (MIS) providers, is strengthening the monitoring and evaluation capacities of the national health system. With this aim, the e-health system was developed on a national level to provide a unified national monitoring and evaluation system. It is designed to be fully integrated within all national health providers and is intended to be the source of reliable health data for regulators, thus increasing accountability and improving Ukraine's input into global reporting.

WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health to increase the institutional capacity of the e-Health Project Office and the newly created state-owned enterprise, eZdorovya, particularly through the following actions.

- WHO conducted a health information review in 2016 at the start of the government initiative to create the central e-health system.
- WHO reviewed and provided feedback on technical documents on the central e-health system.
- WHO provided technical input to the draft national e-health strategy, which was developed by the e-Health Project Office.
- WHO conducted a comprehensive review of the governance and current status of the central e-health system and its linkage with PHC services.
- WHO consultants supported the process of developing the software architecture for the red list (i.e. of patients who haven't signed a declaration with PHC providers) data processing, capitation and reimbursement modules.

## Events in 2016–2017

Two missions to support the development of e-health standards and the review of system architecture

International eHealth Week 2017, Malta, which was attended by four Ministry of Health experts

## Events in 2018–2019

International eHealth Week 2018, Spain, which was attended by two Ministry of Health experts

A strategic and planning eHealth meeting in Denmark, which was attended by two Ministry of Health experts

**Ukrainian health-care facilities keep all of their records on paper, which results in poor-quality statistical data. Paper documentation also hinders the process of data transition and interoperability between different levels of care, which contributes to the poor continuity of care in the country.**

WHO provided full support to the state-owned enterprise e-Health in developing an electronic health record system, from determining the requirements, architecture and development of software, to testing and launching the final product. Through providing technical advice, WHO ensured that the newly created product is harmonized with the best international practices in health and includes such features as personalized immunization registry and noncommunicable disease risk assessment scores.

The launch of the electronic health record system in the second half of 2019 will also provide the Government with tools for quality control and enable further health-care financing reform by introducing fee-for-service payment mechanisms for ambulatory care.

In 2018 after the successful launch of the Doctor for Every Patient campaign, the Ministry of Health and NHSU started preparing new payment mechanisms for specialized health care: the Fee for Service pilot project for ambulatory outpatient care.

MIS providers and the central e-health system will support this process by obtaining information on the kinds of services used via an e-referral mechanism. WHO provided technical support for e-Health to develop the e-Referral subproject, from determining the requirements and writing the requirement specification to developing the data model and testing the system and providing technical support to MIS providers on integration into the e-Health system.

## Research

The Government of Ukraine made the commitment to strengthen the national health research system and increase knowledge of health in order to be able to coordinate research activities with the national public health priorities. WHO supported Ukrainian research institutes to define their research agendas and strengthen their capacities to conduct and use research on public health priorities through the following actions.

- Through WHO advocacy support, Ukraine officially joined the European Health Research Network (40). To further foster Ukrainian partnership with international research institutions, participation for the first time of Ukrainian representatives in a Network web meeting was facilitated in December 2018.
- The WHO Regional Office for Europe helped to organize a seminar entitled Strengthening national health research systems in the WHO European Region: implementation of the European Action Plan to Strengthen the Use of Evidence, Information and Research for Policy-making in Ukraine, which took place in Kyiv in October 2018.



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## The WHO Regional Office for Europe

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations created in 1948 with the primary responsibility for international health matters and public health. The WHO Regional Office for Europe is one of six regional offices throughout the world, each with its own programme geared to the particular health conditions of the countries it serves.

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