



Achieving universal coverage of tuberculosis services in the WHO European Region

Countries in the WHO European Region have made good progress towards ending tuberculosis (TB), in line with the implementation of the Regional Action Plan. The Region experienced the fastest decline of TB incidence and mortality (-15% and -24% respectively) among all WHO regions in 2015–2018, and most countries provide some form of universal coverage of TB services – a key pillar in the elimination of TB. Yet, several challenges still make TB a significant public health issue in the Region.

An effective TB response which leaves no one behind requires robust health systems to accelerate the achievement of universal coverage of TB prevention and care services.

National and international partners can help close the gap

National health authorities manage and allocate resources towards ending TB. Together with key partners, including communities affected by the disease, they should identify and adopt the most suitable approach to ensuring rapid and effective universal access to TB prevention, treatment and care.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe has made tools available and developed best practices that can support this process, and will continue to support the efforts of national TB programmes to achieve universal coverage.

CHALLENGES

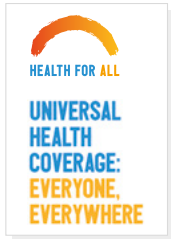
- The growing proportion of drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) in several countries
- Increasing TB/HIV coinfection due to a rise of HIV in the Region, especially in the eastern part
- TB, HIV and viral hepatitis programmes working in silos in several countries
- A reduction of external donor funding for TB
- A lack of sustainable human resources and sound health financing mechanisms
- Latent TB infection (LTBI) largely not addressed
- A fast changing environment with unpredictable movement of people within and across countries

TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES...

- ...countries need to align regulatory base, financing mechanisms and human resources, ensuring that:
- access is available to WHO-recommended diagnostics and medicines for TB and DR-TB;
 - specialized human resources are available to manage DR-TB in both children and adults;
 - scaled-up diagnostic and laboratory capacity delivers adequate detection services;
 - integrated TB care follows people-centred models, in line with WHO recommendations and national clinical protocols;
 - People living with HIV and children under 5 years who are household contacts of people with pulmonary TB in all settings are screened for LTBI.

While there is no “one size fits all” approach, achieving universal coverage of TB services requires:

- (a) expanding the package of high-quality services, including prevention, diagnosis, treatment, follow-up and care;
- (b) expanding the coverage of services to all people, especially vulnerable groups and key populations;
- (c) alleviating out-of-pocket costs and improve efficiency of services by adopting people-centred models of care.



Universal health coverage (UHC) is the health element of leaving no one behind. It means that all people and communities receive the health services they need without suffering financial hardship. UHC includes the full range of essential, quality health services: from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care. This is why UHC is one of WHO's three strategic priorities for the next years.



TB is a contagious airborne disease. A quarter of the world's population is infected with it. Timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment can prevent further spread of the disease. People-centred care can improve treatment outcomes.

TB and UHC: the vision of the WHO Regional Office for Europe

WHO End TB strategy: "No affected families facing catastrophic costs due to tuberculosis".

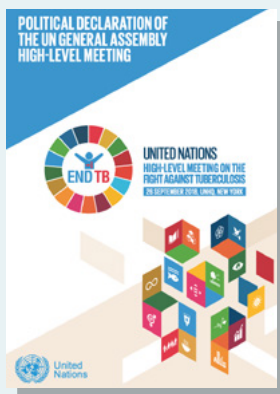
Tuberculosis action plan for the WHO European Region 2016–2020: "End the spread of drug-susceptible and drug-resistant tuberculosis by achieving universal access to prevention, diagnosis and treatment in all Member States in the WHO European Region".

WHO Multisectoral Accountability Framework to Accelerate Progress to End TB by 2030: Universal coverage of TB care and prevention is one of three pillars.

Key statements advocating for universal coverage of TB services

"We, Heads of State and Government and representatives of States and Governments,... reaffirm our commitment to end the tuberculosis epidemic globally by 2030 in line with the Sustainable Development Goals target...and pledge... to work together...to fight this preventable and treatable disease,... [that] requires a comprehensive response, including towards achieving Universal Health Coverage..."

United to end tuberculosis: an urgent global response to a global epidemic. Political declaration of the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the fight against tuberculosis, 26 September 2018, New York



"We commit to... scaling up TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care and working towards the goal of universal health coverage."

Moscow Declaration to End TB (2017)

"2.A.3 Member States will ensure universal coverage of tuberculosis services through the provision of a full range of high-quality tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care, free of charge and of equitable access to all in need, especially the most vulnerable populations (by 2020)."

Tuberculosis action plan for the WHO European Region 2016–2020 and Roadmap to implement the tuberculosis action plan for the WHO European Region 2016–2020

"Health 2020 reaffirms the commitment of WHO and its Member States to ensure universal coverage, including access to high-quality and affordable care and medicines... Universal access to high-quality diagnosis and treatment, including effective diagnosis and sustained treatment of multidrug-resistant TB cases, has been shown to be effective in many countries in the European Region, but it has yet to be implemented in all of them."

Health 2020. A European policy framework and strategy for the 21st century



"Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all."

Sustainable Development Goal target 3.8

"We will work within and across sectors with national and international partners, building stronger supportive environments for those left behind, calling for universal health coverage and universal social protection, which can better prevent and respond to the diseases and condition, and coinfections, by accelerating inclusive sustainable development."

United Nations Common Position on Ending HIV, TB and Viral Hepatitis through Intersectoral Collaboration (2018)

