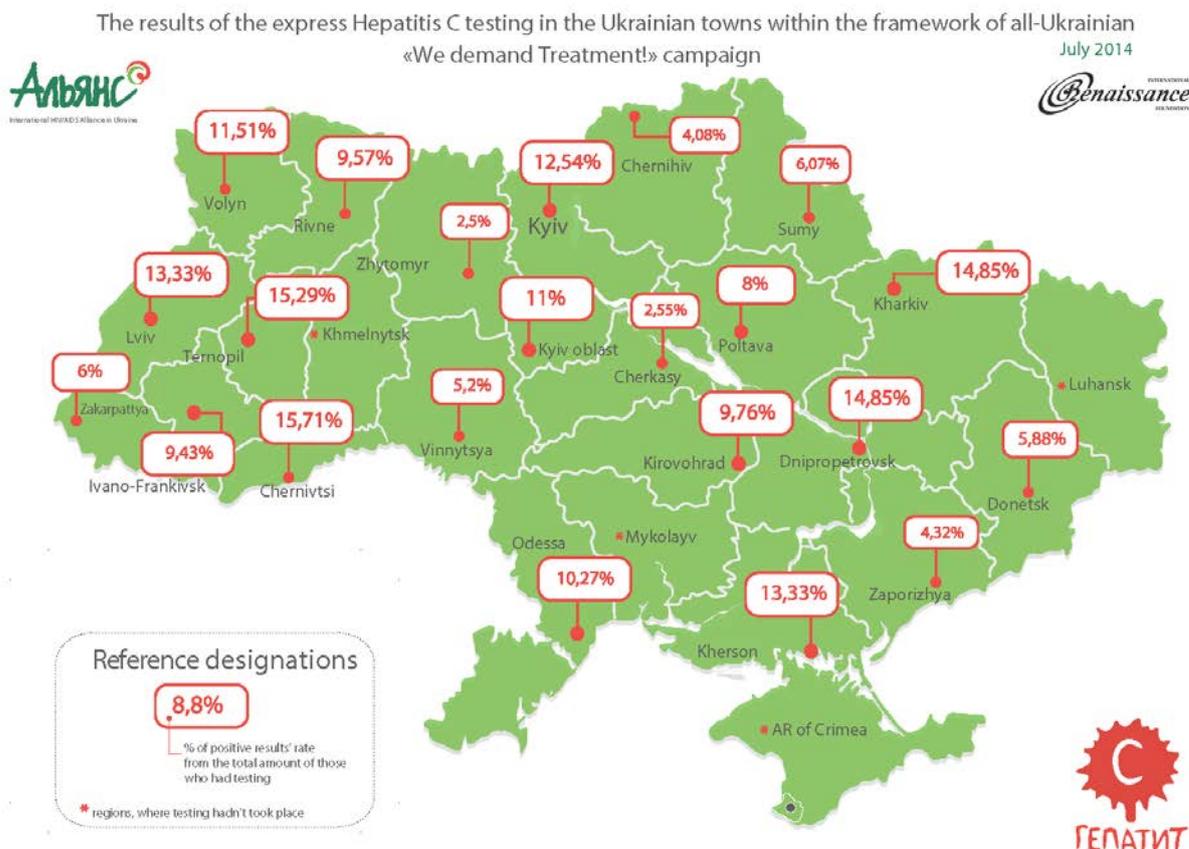


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PRESS-RELEASE

9% tested HCV-positive during the World Hepatitis Day in Ukraine

According to the rapid testing results, the highest prevalence of viral hepatitis C (HCV) is registered in Chernivtsi (15.7%), Ternopil (15.2%), Dnipropetrovsk (14.9%) and Kherson (13.33%) oblasts. Quite high infection level was registered in the capital – 12.5%. In Volyn oblast the testing took place for the first time, yet 11.5% of positive results turned out to be an alarming start. The average ratio of positive results among the general population in the country is 8.8% (in 2013 – 12.9%, in 2012 – 9.6%). It is worth to remind that in 2012-2013 Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Makiyivka, Chernivtsi and Sumy were holding the gloomy high score by infection rate. Certain decrease in the country indicator may be attributable to the fact that this year there times more were tested, than the previous one and no testing was held in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea and Luhansk oblast this year.



On July 28, 2014, on the World Hepatitis Day, within the framework of the all-Ukrainian “Demand Treatment!” campaign in Kyiv and 30 cities of Ukraine public actions were held under the slogan «**Hepatitis C is curable! Let’s care for health in a new way!**». During the events, 4,500 persons were tested for hepatitis C with high quality rapid tests. The non-governmental organizations staff and

medical workers involved in the public events emphasize very high demand for testing, which convincingly proves increasing awareness on HCV. Moreover, the testing was to some extent carried out in Donetsk oblast and raised vivid interest among the citizens and media, despite extremely unfavorable conditions in the region. During the public actions, there were much more of those willing to get HCV tested as compared with the previous years, therefore demand for rapid tests exceeded supply.

According to Serhiy Filippovych, Associate Director: Treatment of Alliance-Ukraine, *«any positive result must be confirmed by laboratory diagnostics to establish accurate diagnosis. However, such screenings allow us tracing the overall epidemic trends. This is a matter of concern, given the absence of reliable incidence statistics, hidden epidemic progress and asymptomatic disease progress at early stages, often making people unaware of the fact that they are infected. But remember, **hepatitis C is curable**, if timely detected and if treatment is started as soon as possible! The disease is better treatable if detected at an early stage».*

Some steps have been already taken to provide efficient and safe treatment. First 100 patients are already undergoing treatment within the project of ICF “International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine” (Alliance Ukraine) with the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Tetyana Afanasiadi, a patient with Hepatitis C since 2000, is already receiving the treatment thanks to the Alliance Ukraine project. She told about her way to recovery, *«As recently as 2 years ago I had 3-rd stage of liver fibrosis which is difficult to treat. However, in spring I started taking medicines and already received a positive result: no HCV is detected in my blood, I feel great, I do not have any side effects and I'm starting to recover. I am very grateful for this chance and call upon everybody not to be afraid, get tested, register in the clinical records and obtain successful treatment, as I do».*

In 2013 Alliance-Ukraine achieved the price decrease for standard treatment from USD 14,000 to USD 5,000, and thanks to the joint efforts of civil society state undertakings on the medicines procurement at a reduced price were included in the recently adopted State Program on Viral Hepatitis. Local hepatitis programs have been already adopted and enacted in 8 oblasts. However, allocation of funds from state and local budgets to procure high quality and safe medicines remains drastically insufficient.

Olena Sakhovska, HCV-infected mother of two children: *«I hope that the first steps made by the state will be continued and I'll have a real chance to recover, and my children will not be afraid of losing their mother. There are many people like me, and we are waiting for affordable treatment».*

Liudmyla Maistat, Coordinator of the All-Ukrainian “Demand Treatment!” campaign, ICF «International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine”, emphasizes, that *“Hepatitis C treatment remains unaffordable for the majority of our citizens due to the price which is still high. Dozens of thousands of people in Ukraine are waiting for this life-saving treatment. Thus the consolidated efforts of all involved parties – the state, pharmaceutical companies and civil society – are necessary to make treatment affordable and accessible through further decrease of prices for medications and expanding treatment programs through allocation of sufficient funds and procurements at reduced prices”.*

According to the WHO, nowadays 185 million of the world population is infected with HCV, 350,000 die annually due to the lack of treatment. Ukraine holds the first place in Europe for viral hepatitis spread pace, the number of people infected with hepatitis C is approximately 1.2 million.



The principal aim of the All-Ukrainian “[Demand Treatment!](#)” campaign implemented by ICF “International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine” since June 2012 with the support of International Renaissance Foundation is the Governmental recognition viral Hepatitis C epidemic in the country; development and approval of the State and oblast programs of viral hepatitis prevention and treatment with adequate budget funding; approval of the viral hepatitis treatment guidelines compliant to the international standards; price reduction for diagnostics and treatment and ensuring state procurement of high quality and safe medicines at reduced prices.

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