

## **Alliance Scales Up Access to Highly Effective Hepatitis C Treatment in Ukraine**

In 2014, Alliance for Public Health together with its partners and with support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria reached an agreement with the manufacturer of the original drug on procurement of sofosbuvir at a special price of US\$900 per treatment course. It allowed launching the first in Ukraine Program to expand access to hepatitis C virus (HCV) diagnostics and highly effective treatment for key affected populations (KAPs) since April 2015. Within the Program, it is planned to cover at least 1,500 members of KAPs with treatment services. According to the results of laboratory testing of the patients who already received treatment, sustained virologic response was achieved in 92% patients. High treatment results in KAPs are achieved largely due to social support of patients in the course of treatment, which is provided thanks to successful partnership of non-governmental organizations and healthcare facilities within implementation of community-based HCV service delivery model. Based on the results of the Alliance HCV Treatment Program, direct-acting antiviral agent, sofosbuvir, was included to the Unified Clinical Protocol for the Treatment of Viral Hepatitis C and List of Drugs Procurement, and was procured with the funds of 2015 state budget to provide treatment for HCV patients, who will be able to receive highly effective therapy as soon as in 2016. For comparison: treatment regimens with pegylated interferon and ribavirin (Peg-IFN+RBV) without combination with sofosbuvir, which are still procured by some healthcare facilities and local authorities within oblast viral hepatitis treatment programs, have treatment success rate of no more than 50%, are much more expensive and are characterized with higher treatment interruption rate due to a big number of side effects.

Currently, the HCV program in Ukraine with support of Alliance is implemented in 19 selected healthcare institutions. Social support of patients is provided by partner non-governmental organizations. Within the Alliance Program, over 60 doctors and social workers received training on the innovative approaches to HCV treatment.

Advocacy efforts of Alliance are aimed at introduction of a highly effective model of HCV diagnostics and treatment with direct-acting antivirals at the national level with allocation of adequate funding from state and local budgets.

Apart from Alliance HCV Treatment Program, in Ukraine there is a National Targeted Social Program of Viral Hepatitis Prevention, Diagnostics and Treatment for the period till 2016 and oblast viral hepatitis prevention, diagnostics and treatment programs. To get more detailed information on the treatment opportunities within the state and oblast programs, you can contact you local infectious disease doctor.