

HEPATITIS C: response to the epidemic

newsletter

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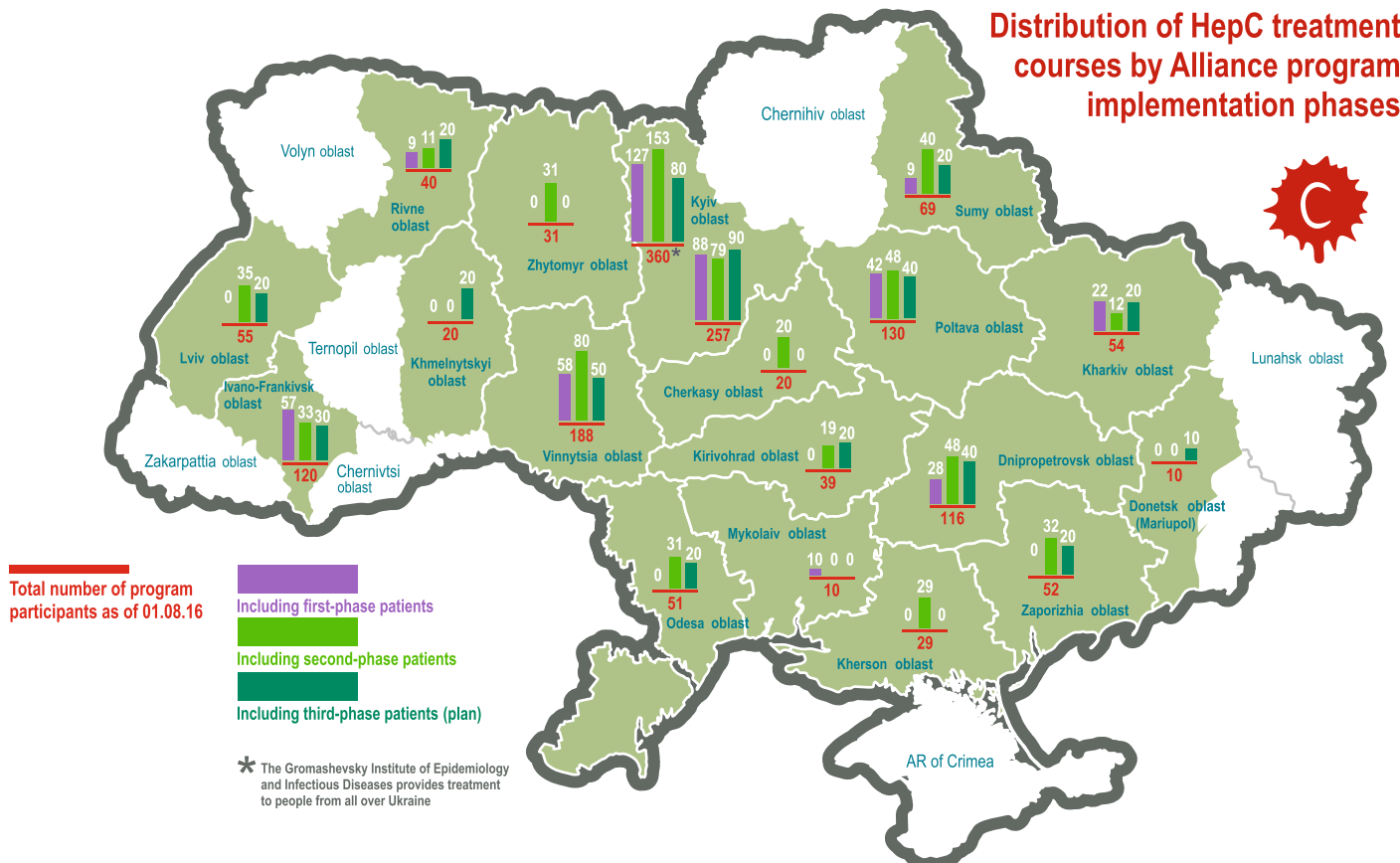


Alliance for Public Health scales up access to diagnostics and treatment of Hepatitis C in Ukraine

Key objectives:

- Establish community-based HCV treatment models using direct-acting antivirals for most vulnerable populations and people with HIV/HCV co-infection
- Support and ensure access to laboratory diagnostics for treatment monitoring and further follow-up
- Conduct research to define the most effective model of HCV treatment in most vulnerable populations using DAA
- Integrate DAA-based regimens into the National HCV Treatment Guidelines

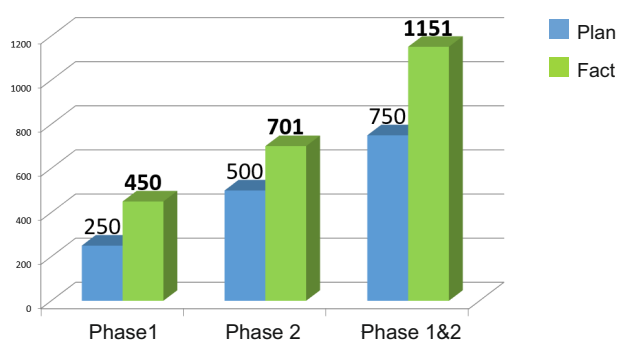
Distribution of HepC treatment courses by Alliance program implementation phases



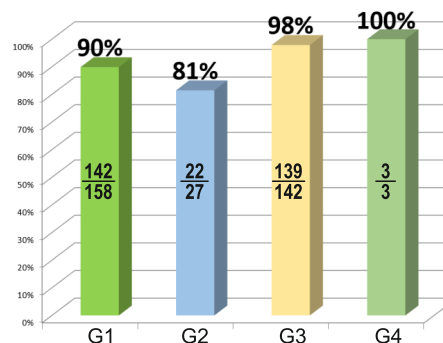
Main partners of Alliance for Public Health

- State institution “Public Health Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine”
- Healthcare institutions of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine
- NGOs
- State institution “The Gromashevsky Institute of Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases, of the Academy of Medical Science of Ukraine”

Patient Enrolment Rate and Treatment Progress



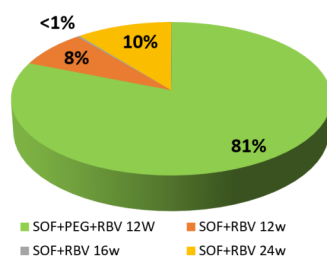
Treatment Outcomes by Genotypes (SVR 12w)



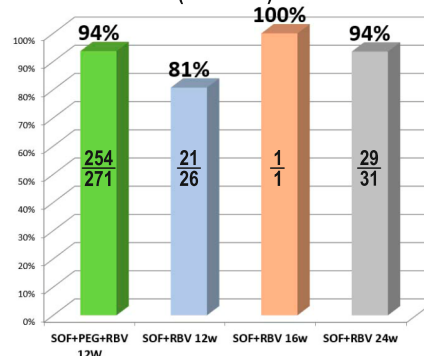
Achievements

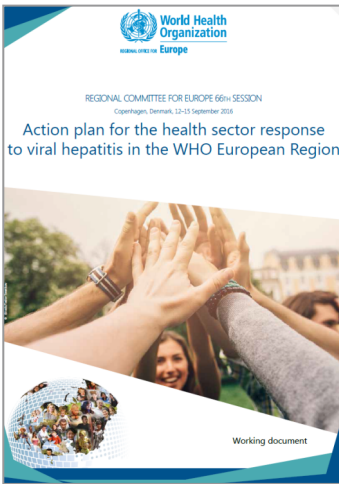
- Overachieving patient enrolment indicators during two phases of program implementation (153%)
- 93% sustained virologic response (12 weeks after treatment)
- 19 HCFs involved into project implementation in 17 oblasts of Ukraine
- 13 NGOs provide social support services
- 4 trainings for more than 60 medical and social workers
- 1,602 tests for viral load provided free of charge within treatment monitoring
- Awareness-raising sessions launched to prevent re-infections
- Monitoring visits conducted in partnership with UCDC
- Monitoring of the stock of drugs carried out on a monthly basis
- Patient register maintained
- The practice initiated to discuss complicated cases with international clinical experts
- Data collection started within an operating study
- Together with the State Expert Center, a procedure was established to send notifications on side effects of drugs
- Sofosbuvir was included to the National Clinical Guidelines “Viral Hepatitis C”, version dd. 04/11/2015

Treatment Regimens



Treatment Outcomes by Regimens (SVR 12w)





The first Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region approved by 53 countries, including Ukraine

The first Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis for 53 countries of the European region was approved on 14 September 2016 at the 66th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe. Over 300 parliamentarians took part in the session of the Committee, including ministers of health of the European countries.

It is estimated that in Europe 13 million people live with chronic hepatitis B, and about 15 million – with chronic hepatitis C. Two-third of the infected people live in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Every day, over 450 people in the region still die of the conditions caused by viral hepatitis, despite the availability of prevention means, because of the restricted access to vital treatment.

The Action plan is the basis for the health sector to adopt integrated actions to fight viral hepatitis, including: planning at the national level taking into account relevant data as well as the local situation and the existing needs; raising public awareness; preventing the spread of viral hepatitis as well as providing diagnostics, care and treatment services with a focus on the populations most affected by or most vulnerable to viral hepatitis.

The overall goal of the Action plan is the elimination of viral hepatitis as a public health threat in the European Region by 2030, by reducing morbidity and mortality due to viral hepatitis and its complications, and ensuring equitable access to recommended prevention, testing, care and treatment services for all.

Seven regional targets, to be reached by 2030, are essential for achieving the ambitious goal of hepatitis elimination. The first five targets listed below relate to prevention while targets six and seven relate to testing and treatment:

- **95%** coverage with three-dose HBV vaccine for infants, in countries that implement universal vaccination;
- **90%** coverage with interventions to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HBV: hepatitis B birth-dose vaccination or other approaches;
- **100%** of blood donations screened using quality assured methods;
- **50%** of injections administered with safety-engineered injection devices;
- at least 200 sterile injection equipment kits distributed per person per year for people who inject drugs, as part of comprehensive package of harm reduction services;
- **50%** of people living with chronic HBV and HCV infections are diagnosed and aware of their condition; and
- **75%** treatment coverage of people diagnosed with HBV and HCV infections who are eligible for treatment.



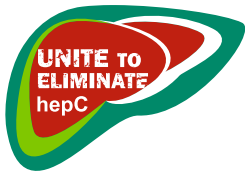
Ludmila Maistat

The Alliance for Public Health (Ludmila Maistat, Senior Advisor on HCV Policy and Advocacy) took part in the activities of the WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Committee for Viral Hepatitis, which was responsible for the development and finalization of the Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis. The Alliance experience in implementing the program to scale up diagnostics and treatment in vulnerable populations, which has been implemented in Ukraine for over a year with high efficiency (93%), has been used to develop the Action plan.



Olha Holubovska

«Ukraine as one of the countries most affected by the epidemic faces essential challenges to be addressed in the National Plan to Eliminate Viral Hepatitis. The Ministry of Health together with the Alliance for Public Health initiated development of the National Plan, which will be based on the Action Plan approved by the WHO. It should be mentioned that the WHO Action Plan calls on the state to ensure integrated approach, stable funding, comply with the principles of justice and equal access to treatment for all categories of patients, and introduce innovations to assure quality medical care. To achieve the goals set, the National Plan should contain a mechanism to ensure financial sustainability and affordability of the interventions to be implemented by the health care system. Thus, we expect that the state will comply with its responsibility to allocate the required resources», - underlines the chief consultant specialist on the infectious diseases of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine Olha Holubovska, MD, PhD.



Unite to eliminate

Activists across the world unite to call for immediate access to new drugs to treat hepatitis C

On the World Hepatitis Day, 28th July, activists across the world and health campaigners are highlighting that novel, effective medicines to treat hepatitis C – direct acting antivirals (DAAs) – are still out of reach of the people who need them most.

In the frames of the Unite to Eliminate campaign, launched in 2015, The Alliance Centre for HIV, Hepatitis C and Drug Use (Alliance centre), in close partnership with Alliance Linking Organizations from all over the world, is calling for scaling up the access to HepC treatment in the most affected countries including but not limited to the development of comprehensive national hepatitis programs, allocation of adequate resources to diagnose and treat hepatitis C, and negotiations with pharmaceutical companies to dramatically reduce their pricing to ensure access for all those in need.

Ludmila Maistat, Senior Advisor on HCV Policy and Advocacy at the Alliance for Public Health, coordinator of the global campaign, said: "Elimination of HCV is impossible without ensuring access to

diagnostics and treatment for vulnerable groups, because it's the use of injecting drugs which is the driving force of the epidemic. Fulfilling the recommendations of WHO and the European Association for the Study of the Liver entails inclusion of representatives of vulnerable groups in HCV testing and treatment programs, which is important to consider while shaping national plans and programs to overcome the epidemic." To attract the attention of decision makers, numerous advocacy events were held in Ukraine, Cambodia, Kenya, Myanmar, Vietnam and Indonesia by Alliance and its Linking Organizations. The communication coverage in social media reached 41,600 people from 15 countries of Asia, Africa and Europe. The Alliance Centre leads and coordinates activities of the organizations involved to maximize the awareness-raising and community-mobilization efforts as well as reinforce advocacy for affordable DAAs for all, including PWID at national and international levels.

Best practices in the national advocacy in the countries taking part in the campaign:



KANCO, Kenya

— 63 key stakeholders involved into HepC activities: 62 KANCO organisations and the state Health Department of the Kilifi county.

— KANCO-Watamu drop-in centre organized a campaign held in Watamu village area.

— Sensitization Forum was conducted with peer educators, outreach workers, PWIDs and staff.

— KANCO Coast regional offices staff were displaying hepatitis C key messages through Raise Your Hand campaigns and were distributing IEC materials, participating in social media dialogues.

KHANA, Cambodia

— KHANA participated in the press conference on HepC organized by government and delivered a presentation to raise the awareness about HepC among the implementing partners.

— Raise-your-hand campaigns, with the press conference participants engaged.

— HepC research initiated. Its objectives:

1. To assess the prevalence of hepatitis C and its subtypes among PLHIV, PWID and among pregnant women in Cambodia.
2. To determine the knowledge and attitude differences between the three groups mentioned above.
3. To identify risk factors associated with hepatitis C mono-infection and with HIV/HCV co-infection.
4. To document different practices in care and treatment of hepatitis C in Cambodia

The research results will be published in December 2016.



Over 150 million people are infected with hepatitis C globally, with up to 4 million people living with HCV in Ukraine. One of the priority areas of activities of the Alliance for Public Health is fighting the spread of the epidemic of hepatitis C in Ukraine and providing HCV diagnostics and treatment for key affected populations. In 2012, Alliance initiated all-Ukrainian "Demand Treatment!" advocacy campaign primarily aimed at scaling up

access to diagnostics and treatment of hepatitis C in Ukraine. Since 2015, the Alliance Centre for HIV, Hepatitis C and Drug Use has been implementing a global campaign, Unite to Eliminate HepC: Know It, Test It, Treat It. In 2015, Alliance launched first Ukrainian HCV treatment program with DAAs, in the frames of this program over 1,000 key population representatives received access to effective treatment.