

Situation Report

on the Status of HIV/TB/HCV/OST Prevention and Treatment Programs in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (as of 29 May 2017)

From the first days of Crimea annexation and launch of the military operation in the east of Ukraine, Alliance for Public Health (hereinafter – Alliance) defined that one of its priorities was support of HIV, tuberculosis, and viral hepatitis prevention and treatment programs, as well as support of patients of opioid substitution therapy (OST). The goals of Alliance are of pure humanitarian nature – despite any political factors, to provide maximum support to those who have already been receiving treatment or prevention services, if possible to ensure uninterrupted delivery of such services, and to support those clients who are in need of assistance. The situation with implementation of comprehensive HIV, TB and hepatitis activities in the east of Ukraine (in the areas of military conflict) in the first half of 2017 remains tense.

HIV Prevention in Key Populations

*Coverage of Key Populations with Harm Reduction Services from 01.01.2017 to 29.05.2017 (preliminary data)**

Oblast	PWID			SW			MSM		
	Plan 2017	Actual	%	Plan 2017	Actual	%	Plan 2017	Actual	%
Donetsk	27,891	19,408	70%	1,444	1,091	76%	1,446	1,062	73%
<i>incl. NGCA**</i>		7,564			360			271	
Luhansk	8,976	6,421	72%	802	630	79%	-		-
<i>incl. NGCA</i>		4,530			630				
TOTAL*	36,867	25,783	70%	2,246	1,721	77%	1,446	1,062	73%
<i>incl. NGCA</i>		12,084			990			271	

* The total figures demonstrate the number of persons (not visits), who receive prevention services in different organizations/regions.

** NGCA – non-government controlled areas

Alliance continues to support HIV/STI prevention projects for key populations implemented by **11** local partner NGOs. Activities are carried out in **18** settlements of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts temporarily not controlled by the Ukrainian government and in **32** settlements in the government-controlled territory. Within the above-mentioned projects implemented in the areas temporarily not controlled by Ukraine, about **12 thousand** clients from among populations most vulnerable to HIV received the basic package of HIV/STI prevention services in 5 months 2017.

HIV Testing

The projects provide rapid testing for HIV, hepatitis B and C and sexually transmitted infections. Based on preliminary estimates for the period of 1 January through 29 May 2017, HIV rapid testing services were provided to:

- Donetsk oblast: **10,364** members of key populations (with **99** (1%) positive test results);
- Luhansk oblast: **3,044** members of key populations (with **25** (0.8%) positive test results).

Early TB Detection in Key Populations

Ten NGOs in Donetsk oblast and three NGOs in Luhansk oblast are working with the component of early TB detection in key populations. Based on the preliminary data, as of 29 May 2017:

- **6,304** clients in **Donetsk** oblast were screened for TB using survey questionnaires (including **3,228** in NGCA):
 - **630** people received positive screening results (**138** in NGCA);
 - **252 (40%)** people received TB diagnostics services in healthcare facilities (**26** in NGCA);
 - **4** confirmed cases of tuberculosis (**3** cases in NGCA), **2** started treatment (50%).
- **2,256** clients in **Luhansk** oblast were screened for TB using survey questionnaires (including **1,706** in NGCA):
 - **237** people received positive screening results (**87** in NGCA);
 - **225 (95%)** people received TB diagnostics services in healthcare facilities (**85** in NGCA);
 - **3** confirmed cases of tuberculosis with all patients initiated on ART (100% – all in NGCA).

Management of Patients with Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis

Medical and social support services are delivered to patients with multidrug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) only in government-controlled areas. Nurses of the Red Cross Society of Ukraine, which is a sub-recipient of Alliance, visit clients daily providing them with TB drugs and twice a month – with food packages. As of 29 May 2017, such services were provided to **61** patients in Luhansk oblast and **122** – in Donetsk oblast.

Procurement and Supply of Drugs and Medical Goods

Deliveries of medical goods to the government-controlled areas in the east of Ukraine are conducted on a regular basis according to the schedule. In particular, since the beginning of the year, 2,946,606 pieces of prevention materials and rapid tests, 20,667 packs of TB drugs and 78 packs of hepatitis C drugs have been supplied.

At the same time, the delivery of medical goods and prevention materials to non-government controlled areas remains a constant challenge for Alliance. In the last three years, the security procedures to supply goods to those areas are getting more and more complicated.

In May 2017, Alliance organized the delivery of another consignment of TB drugs to healthcare facilities in Donetsk. Together with the December delivery, the supplied materials should be sufficient to fully cover treatment needs of 500 patients during 20 months.

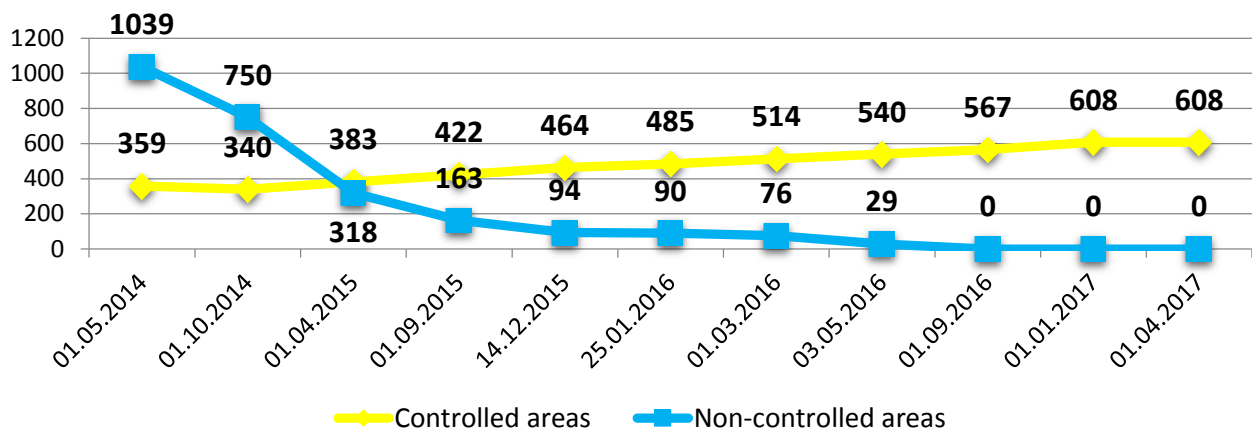
This was a special delivery as it included supplying to Donetsk reagents to test for sensitivity to TB drugs. Such reagents are used in the modern equipment of the world leading producers (Bactec, GeneXpert) and they allow diagnosing people with TB much quicker and much more effective.

The delivery of such reagents allowed Alliance to recommence diagnostics of MDR-TB in the region. It was preceded with a technical assessment of the equipment of third-level bacteriological laboratories, its maintenance (including replacement of some modules) and preparations to the scheduled launch. As of today, diagnostics using liquid-based assays has already been launched in Donetsk, and the reagents delivered should be sufficient for 1,300 primary isolation assays, 800 tests for first-line TB drugs, 360 – for second-line TB drugs and 275 assays to identify Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex bacteria.

Alliance has already started external assessment for the third-level laboratory located in Donetsk Oblast TB Clinic.

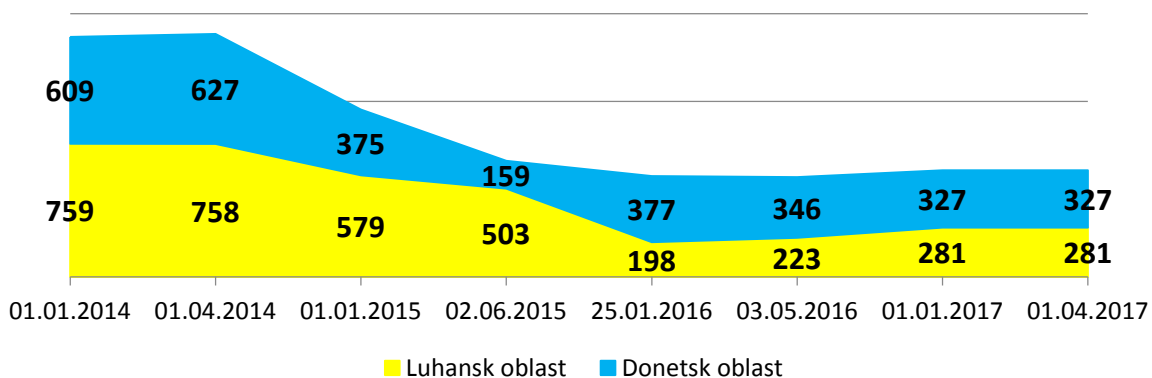
Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST)

Dynamics in the number of OST patients in government controlled and non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts



Back in 2015, OST programs were suspended in most sites located in the areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts not controlled by the Ukrainian government. The last OST site in Donetsk was closed on 23 June 2016. Since the beginning of military operations, almost 900 patients in the uncontrolled areas lost access to OST. Due to security restrictions and regulatory controls established by the Ukrainian government, the delivery of OST drugs to the affected areas was stopped back in the second half of 2014. Some patients were able to re-commence their OST therapy in government-controlled areas.

Dynamics in the number of OST patients in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts



As of 29 May 2017, **7 OST sites** were operating in the government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts – 4 in Donetsk oblast (Mariupol, Sloviansk, Kramatorsk, Pokrovsk) and 3 in Luhansk oblast (Lysychansk, Severodonetsk, Rubizhne). Today, most of those sites provide take-home OST drugs for 7-10 days by recipes or directly from healthcare facilities, where OST sites operate, or in home care settings.

Hepatitis C (HCV) Treatment

As of 1 May 2017, HCV therapy with direct-acting antivirals was provided free of charge to 11 members of key populations in Mariupol city AIDS center within implementation of the third phase of HCV treatment program by Alliance. In total, the program stipulates the delivery of 9 Sofosbuvir/Ledipasvir-based courses and 5 Sofosbuvir-based courses.

Actual and Potential Risks

Functioning of prevention projects at non-government controlled areas is constantly under threat. This is explained first of all with the lack of proper regulation of the status of humanitarian projects in those areas and in general with unpredictability of the local “authorities”. That is, in turn, the main reason of irregular deliveries and interruptions with the supply of local implementing partners with consumable materials.

According to the recent reports received by Alliance from non-government controlled areas of Donetsk oblast, there is an increase in the number of HIV cases registered in the region. It means that the predictions made last year are now confirmed at the level of local “official agencies”, which proves the need to enhance HIV response efforts in the region.

National HIV/AIDS Hotline: 0-800-500-451

National OST Hotline: 0-800-507-727

Alliance for Public Health

Contact person: Myroslava Andrushchenko

e-mail: andrushchenko@aph.org.ua

Phone: +38 044 4905485 ext. 229