

# HEPATITIS TREATMENT IN WARTIME!

Statement dedicated  
to the World Hepatitis Day!



Every year, on 28 July the [Alliance for Public Health \(APH\)](#) joins the call of the World Health Organization to mark the World Hepatitis Day. This year, the global community is focusing on the need to bring hepatitis treatment closer to communities and family doctors so that people can have a better access to treatment and care. This year, our slogan is simpler: **“Bringing hepatitis treatment closer to people.”** We want hepatitis care in Ukraine to be accessible to all people who need it, especially those most severely affected by the war, who have to live under constant shelling or have to leave their homes. **Starting from the first day of war, representatives of APH and our partner organizations have been making every effort to provide such treatment to the most vulnerable populations.**

## ON THE WORLD HEPATITIS DAY, WE CANNOT BUT RECALL SOME TRULY HEROIC ACTS:

- *When a worker of our partner organization – Istok NGO – in Mariupol together with a doctor of the Mariupol AIDS Center under constant shelling were evacuating vital medications from the hospital building and organized home delivery of such medications to people in need not to interrupt their treatment.*
- *When a social worker in Chernihiv (from Chernihiv branch of the All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV) had to hide in a basement with a patient, when they met for therapy delivery when shelling started.*
- *When staff members of the Alternative NGO based in Odesa did everything possible and impossible to deliver therapy to a patient at the front line.*

There are dozens of such stories... as well as stories of the patients who had to leave their homes to flee the war but were still able to complete their treatment. Who have joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine and territorial defense units. Who had not believed they would be able to get cured, but now they see the result they were striving for and they say: “We have defeated the sneaky virus, and so Ukraine will defeat our enemy.” **On the eve of the World Hepatitis Day, APH initiated an information campaign on its Facebook page, where you can read many truly moving stories.**

## DESPITE ALL THE WARTIME CHALLENGES, APH REMAINS ON THE FRONT LINE OF THE FIGHT AGAINST VIRAL HEPATITIS IN UKRAINE:

- In **2022, 900 people** living with HIV and **50 people** with TB/HCV co-infection received HCV treatment within the APH program, 670 of them – after the start of the full-scale war. **Over 400 patients** completed their HCV treatment courses in the wartime. 99% of the patients covered by APH are people who use drugs and their partners.
- **31 430 persons** from key populations in 2022 were screened for Hep C, 30% of them appeared HCV positiv; 2015 persons were screened for HBV with 0,5% of positive results.
- We deliver medications and reagents for HCV diagnostics to temporary occupied and frontline areas in Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions, where HCV treatment services are provided on an ongoing basis. APH helps to renew operation of the laboratories in healthcare facilities and maintain contact with the patients who had to relocate to safer places.
- **Over 230 patients** continued or completed their therapy at new treatment sites, with the delivery of medicines organized by post and with ongoing remote consultations provided by doctors and case managers.

- In April, laboratory reagents were delivered to the OHMATDYT children's hospital, which for the first time started offering HCV diagnostics in their own laboratory.
- An urgent procurement of **25,000 rapid HCV tests** and **HCV treatment courses** has been made.

For the World Hepatitis Day, **communities in the regions of Ukraine will receive new shipments of medications and diagnostic reagents.**

initiated by APH in 2015, **over 9,400 patients from the key populations received comprehensive packages of HCV diagnostics, treatment and social support during eight years (2015-2022).** The community-based HCV treatment model launched by APH was highly praised by the World Health Organization. In 2022, 14 local civil society organizations in 16 regions of Ukraine are implementing activities aimed at case finding, counseling, referral for diagnostics and treatment, support of treatment adherence, provision of uninterrupted treatment, etc. Offering three individual counseling sessions to prevent HCV reinfection is an important component of case management.

**During the martial law, we are bringing services closer to patients, continuing gradual decentralization of HCV care and providing integrated services. In 2022, alongside with the antiviral therapy patients receive ART, OST, and TB care at 40 treatment sites, including family doctors' clinics.**

**TOGETHER WE WILL WIN! EVERYTHING WILL BE UKRAINE!**



#### **For reference:**

As estimated by the World Health Organization, 354 million people in the world live with hepatitis B and C. Every 30 seconds, someone loses their life to hepatitis. 58 million people in the world have chronic hepatitis C, with 1.5 million being infected every year. Direct-acting antivirals cure HCV with 95% efficiency rate, however access to diagnosis and treatment is low.

It is estimated that **up to 5% of people in Ukraine are infected with viral hepatitis C**, which amounts to 1 to 2 million Ukrainians who need treatment. Among them, 3.6% have chronic HCV. Most of them do not know about their status, because the symptoms of viral hepatitis C can remain hidden for many years.

**WHO data show that Ukraine is the only country in the European region that is in the list of 28 countries with the highest burden of viral hepatitis in the world.**

**HEP CAN'T WAIT, GET TESTED – THIS IS THE ONLY WAY OF PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS FOR VIRAL HEPATITIS**

**☎ NATIONAL VIRAL HEPATITIS HOTLINE: 0-800-50-33-10**