

World AIDS Day 2023: RESILIENCE AMIDST WAR

Ukraine commemorates World AIDS Day amidst an ongoing russian war against our country and our people: nearly 20% of Ukraine's territory occupied by russia, over 10 million of citizens moved within and out of Ukraine, over 1500 health facilities damaged or completely destroyed. For those who were vulnerable before the war, in particular people living with and affected by HIV, their vulnerability and risks increased in times! Since the beginning of the war Alliance for Public Health stood up with other civil society organizations supporting Ukrainian Government to ensure sustainability of HIV response and address emerging humanitarian needs brought by the war.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023:

Alliance for Public Health (APH) plays a remarkable role in HIV testing and referral to HIV treatment, sustaining critical elements of HIV response, bringing innovations and supporting communities.

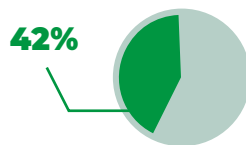
1. HIV CASE FINDING

Nearly **half of the people diagnosed HIV+ in Ukraine** in 2023 were tested within APH and APH-funded partner organizations



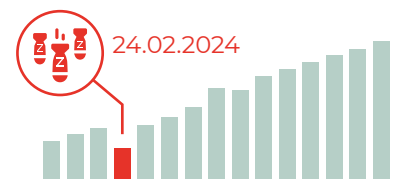
2. ARV TREATMENT

42% of all HIV-infected people who for the first started ART in Ukraine in 2023 were diagnosed and referred to medical facilities by **APH and APH-funded partner organizations.**



3. SUSTAINING KEY PROGRAMS

APH contributes to **sustaining and scaling up** Opioid Agonist Treatment led by the governmental Public Health Center.



4. GAME-CHANGING INNOVATIONS

APH together with governmental Public Health Center managed to negotiate allocation of 100 courses of **CAB LA – long-acting PrEP**. APH funds psycho-social support for OAT patients using **injectable medication Buvidal**. We expanded **mobile services** throughout the country. Innovative approaches include using **artificial intelligence (AI)** to identify people with the highest risk of HIV infection to get tested. We **expanded our services beyond core groups**, also offering HIV and TB services to internally displaced people (IDPs), people living on de-occupied territories, military personnel.

5. PUT PEOPLE FIRST

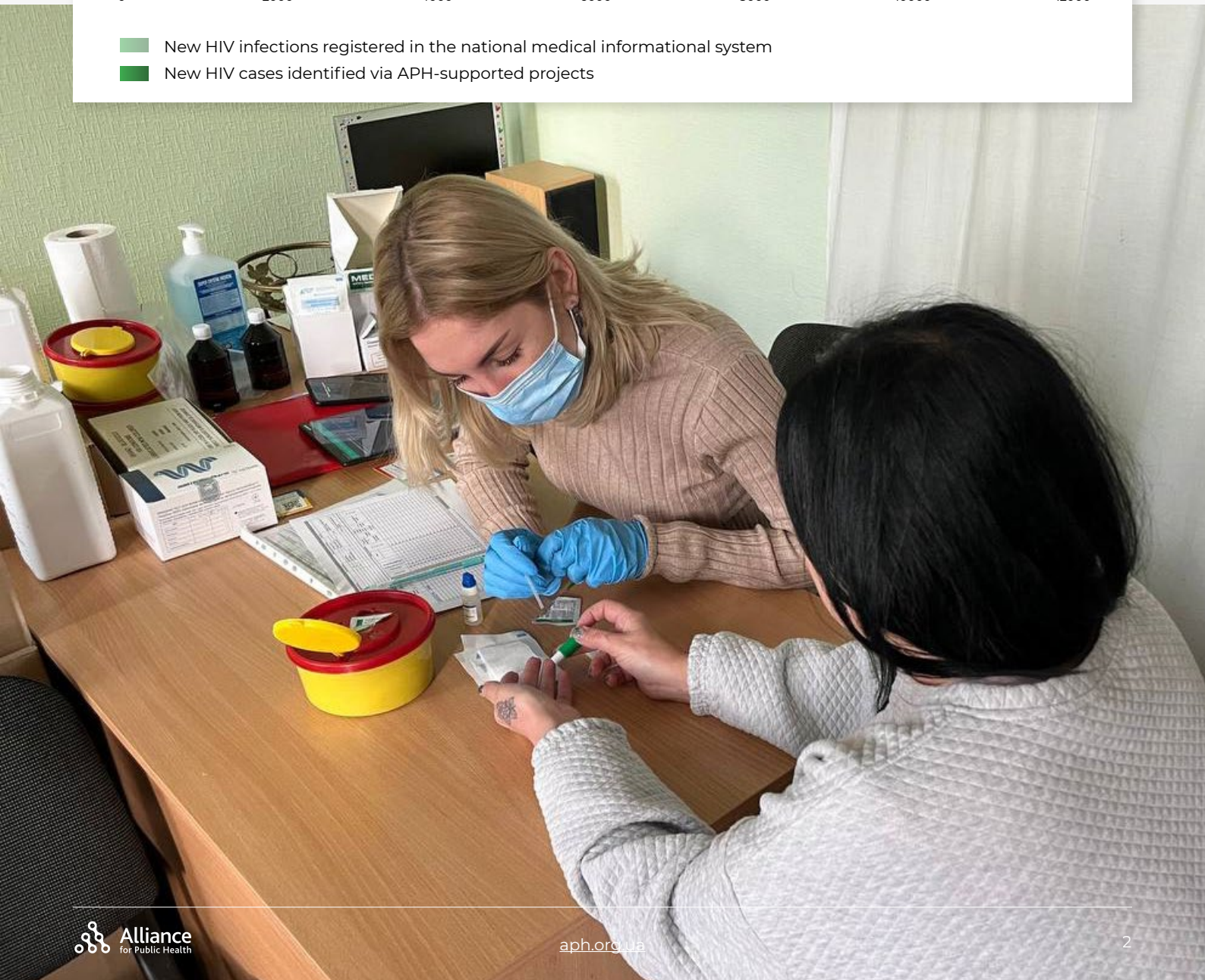
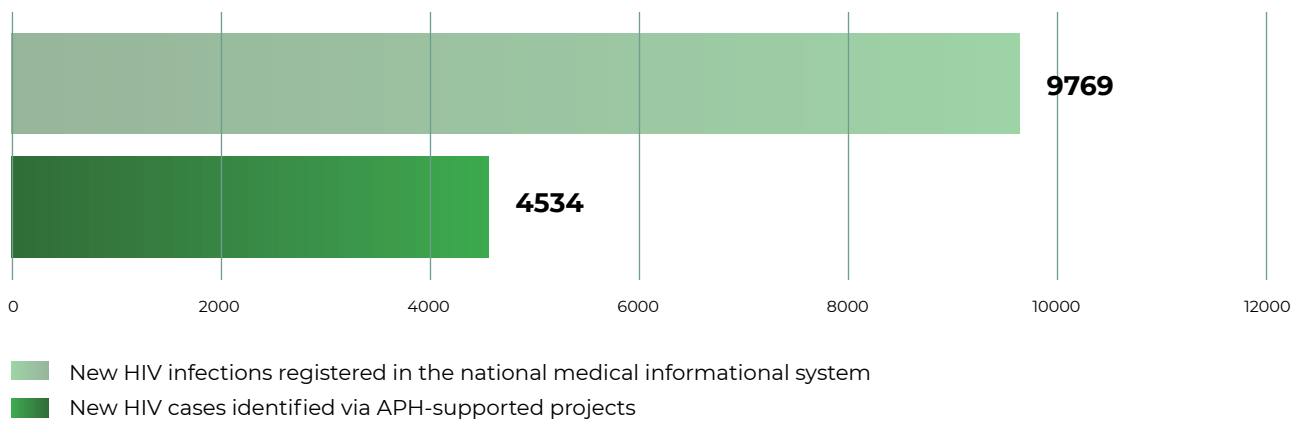
APH has been providing critical support in addressing humanitarian needs of people living with HIV and key affected populations. **Evacuation, humanitarian aid, food, core medical services, delivery of medications and diagnostics, mental health support, shelters and housing** for internally displaced people, ongoing human rights support through **REAct mechanism**, on-line **24/7 support** through **HelpNOW** for Ukrainian war refugees in **51 countries.**

1. NEW CASES DETECTION: TESTING

46% OF ALL NEW HIV CASES IN UKRAINE WERE DETECTED WITHIN APH-IMPLEMENTED PROGRAMS

With the support of the Alliance, our regional partners have tested 155 thousand people from key populations for HIV. This resulted in the detection of 4,534 new cases of HIV infection - in fact, almost every other case was identified through Alliance projects!

APH'S CONTRIBUTION TO NEW HIV CASE FINDING DURING THE WAR
(January-October 2023), SYREX, and PHC (MOH of Ukraine)



REACHING KEY POPULATIONS WITH TESTING AND NEW HIV DIAGNOSIS IS ONE OF THE ALLIANCE'S PRIORITIES

HIV testing models in Alliance projects that ensure high detection rates in key populations:

- More than half of the tests were conducted based on **optimized case finding strategies (OCF)** (at fixed sites) and **MCF (via mobile outpatient clinics)** - **87 thousand** members of key populations were tested, **with an HIV detection rate of 6%**.
- **HIV self-testing** for people who have no access to regular preventive services. **More than 27 thousand self-test kits were distributed within Alliance programs.**
- HIV case detection initiated by healthcare workers at 89 healthcare facilities (as part of the HealthLink project) – **1,601** people were first diagnosed with HIV. The overall percentage of HIV-positive tests under the project is **3%**.



INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS IN 2023:

- **HIV self-testing chatbot** - the number of users increased by 48%.
- To engage with patients who refuse to be tested with blood tests, for the first time ever, healthcare workers were provided with oral self-testing kits. A total of **6,087** tests were distributed, and **32** people were diagnosed with HIV.
- Via the website oraltest.org.ua, **10,984** safe boxes with oral tests were distributed among vulnerable communities.
- Video Doctor Intervention – Involving custom-made videos for HIV patients with instructions on how to invite their partner to get tested. 868 HIV-positive people brought in 966 partners for testing, with **330** new HIV cases thus identified. The case detection rate is **34.2%**.

2. ENSURING UNINTERRUPTED PREVENTION AND HARM REDUCTION OF FROM DRUG USE

IN 2023, APH AND ITS PARTNERS PROVIDED CORE HIV SERVICES TO **70 THOUSAND** REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MOST AT RISK POPULATIONS.
29% ARE NEW CLIENTS OF THE PROGRAMM

In 2023, the Alliance's programmes covered more than **47,000 people who inject drugs (PWID)**, **10,000 men who have sex with men (MSM)**, **5,700 sex workers (SW)** and **4,500 transgender people** with HIV prevention services.



RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE TIMES:

- Access to hormone replacement therapy for trans* people was ensured - **114 clients received 1,629 packs of transfemale and transmale therapy drugs**. Housing, psychological support and comprehensive social support were provided to **23 transgender people** in crisis situations to stabilise and resolve the crisis situation according to the individual needs of the client..
- More than **2000 home-based support and patronage visits were made to PLHIV with disabilities** (health counselling, home-based HIV prevention supplies).
- In August 2023, the **Peer-to-Peer Intervention (PDI)** was launched to provide HIV prevention services to hard-to-reach key populations. In 3 months, more than **5800 representatives of key populations were reached and tested, including 35% of PLHIV, 25% of IDUs, 34% of MSM and 6% of transgender people**.
- A vulnerable group - **young people who experiment with psychoactive substances (PAS)** - received **1800 PartyBox harm reduction kits**, which include oral HIV tests, lubricants, condoms and other components.
- For **MSM who have chemsex, 3,749 PartyBox** harm reduction kits were distributed, including oral HIV tests, lubricants, condoms and substance testing kits.

3. EXPANDING HIV PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PrEP) WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

60% OF NEW PEOPLE WHO INITIATED PrEP DURING 2022 WERE ENGAGED THROUGH APH PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS.

3,778 people from key populations were introduced to PrEP for the first time through Alliance-supported follow-up and referral programs. In January-October 2023, 6304 new people were enrolled in PrEP in Ukraine. Thanks to the Alliance's support programs, more than **1,000** people resumed PrEP after an interruption during this time frame.

An index-based approach to attracting new clients, online outreach, clients' access to transportation to health facilities, geographic expansion of services for IDP clients, and distribution of awareness-raising materials to potential target audiences contributed to an increase in the number of PrEP recipients by 7% (compared to the same period in 2022).

INNOVATION: Due to the Alliance's advocacy efforts and the support of the Public Health Center, in 2023 Ukraine became one of the participants in a unique pilot project involving the use of long-acting injectable cabotegravir in PrEP. Currently, in collaboration with the Public Health Center, WHO, and CDC, preparations are underway to launch the pilot, in which PrEP with injectable cabotegravir will be prescribed to at least 100 patients.



4. MOVING CLOSER TO THE CLIENTS: MODIFICATION OF SERVICES USING MOBILE CLINICS

THE NUMBER OF VISITS FOR HIV PREVENTION AND TESTING SERVICES TO 22 MOBILE OUTPATIENT CLINICS (GF) EXCEEDED **114,000**, WHICH IS **51% HIGHER THAN THE TARGET**.

MOBILITY: In addition to HIV prevention and testing services, mobile outpatient clinics continue to provide evacuation of clients and NGO staff, deliver ART, humanitarian assistance, and transportation of clients and medical staff to healthcare facilities in regions where hostilities are ongoing, etc.



Photo: «Even amid daily shelling, the mobile outpatient clinic in Mykolaiv continues to operate»

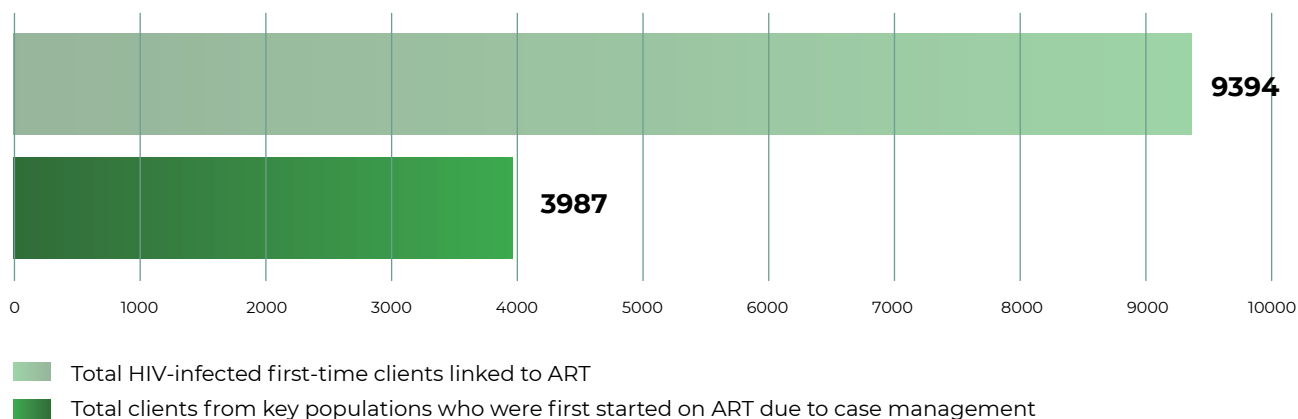
5. ACCESS TO ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY

42% OF ALL NEW ART PATIENTS ARE INVOLVED IN THE ALLIANCE'S PROGRAMS

In January-September 2023, **3,987** people from key populations embarked on ART services for the first time, which is **42%** of all HIV-infected people who were first started on ART in Ukraine.

THE ALLIANCE'S CONTRIBUTION TO LINKING NEW PATIENTS TO ART

(January-September 2023) based on data from SYREX and PHC (MoH of Ukraine)



- More than **1,600** most-at-risk individuals resumed taking ART due to case management.
- More than **28,000** parcels with ARVs were delivered via mail services or shipped to individual addresses so as to prevent ART disruption.
- More than **600** patients with advanced HIV were provided with expensive CT/MRI scans in 24 regions of Ukraine.
- More than **1,300** vehicle trips were made to transport more than 41,000 blood samples from district ART sites to regional/interregional laboratories for testing.
- The work of **340** specialists was supported to track patients who missed a scheduled visit to an ART site at 280 health care facilities via mobile apps. Over the nine months of 2023, 50,500 patients have continued treatment.

6. OVERDOSE PREVENTION

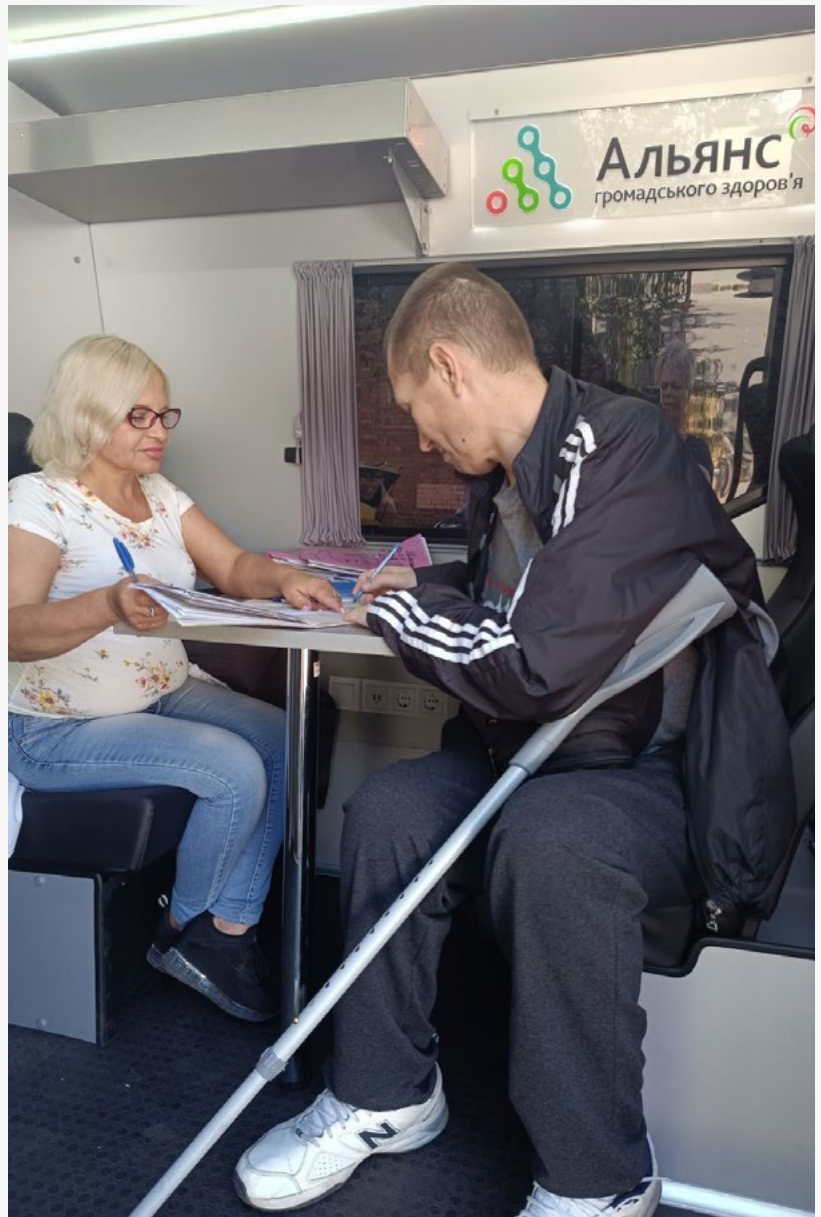
33 THOUSAND PWID RECEIVED COUNSELLING ON THE RISKS, DIAGNOSIS OF OPIOID OVERDOSE, ITS PREVENTION AND THE RULES FOR USING NALOXONE. WE DISTRIBUTED 38 THOUSAND AMPOULES OF NALOXONE, WHICH SAVED MANY LIVES.



7. OPIOID AGONIST TREATMENT IN THE WAR CONTEXT

Despite the challenges of ongoing war, the Alliance continues to support and promote the **expansion of the OAT program** in Ukraine:

- The national OAT program is being implemented at 204 OAT sites, with **21,016** patients receiving treatment.
- **6,000** OAT patients at 112 sites receive psychosocial support, thus gaining access to a wide range of integrated services (counseling, diagnosis, and treatment for HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, tuberculosis, etc.)
- **97.2% of HIV-positive OAT patients receive ART.**
- The rate of retention in treatment is **83.27%**.
- Expansion of OAT at the national level through the introduction of a rapid social navigation system in collaboration with projects for optimized HIV case finding (about 1,000 referral and follow-up cases).
- Keeping all professionals and patients continuously informed on relevant updates and regulations in the field of HIV and drug addiction treatment via the website <https://zpt.org.ua>. Operation of the drug addiction and OAT hotline at 0-800-507-727.



8. ACCESS TO HEPATITIS TREATMENT

As of December 1, 2023, the Alliance provided a comprehensive package of HCV services to 2,000 PLWH. Out of 2,000 patients, 99.5% were PUD and their partners. Treatment effectiveness – 97.6%, adherence to treatment – 99.5%. During the treatment period, each patient received three counseling sessions on prevention of HCV re-infection. The wartime realities notwithstanding, the Alliance's program for HCV diagnosis, treatment, and care is presently being carried out by 14 community-based NGOs, thus reaching 57 HCFs in 16 regions of Ukraine. New treatment sites have been recently established in Selidovo and Dobropillya (Donetsk oblast).

9. DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

The Alliance continues to provide access to quality medical care and preventive supplies for Ukrainians living with HIV and key populations via the **Help24** online portal in close partnership with the Alliance Consultancy and the Public Health Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

Since the beginning of 2023, the following has been provided via this platform:

- **11,726** consultations by qualified medical consultants
- **941** psychological consultations aimed at supporting clients with mental health issues
- **5,821 HelpBox** individual preventive kits

INNOVATIVE ACTIVITY: Development of a telemedicine module based on the Help24 platform which will allow people living with HIV and key populations to access online medical care with even greater convenience and safety, regardless of their location.

10. INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SUPPORT IDP AND REFUGEE CLIENTS AND PATIENTS

During the 20 months of operations, from March 2022 till October 2023, more than 31000 requests were received and coordinated by #HelpNowHUB from Ukrainians in more than 50 countries of the world and from the territory of Ukraine. The requests from PLHIV and KP`s were coordinated by #HelpNow Service, #HelpNowPL, #HelpNowDE, #HelpNowClinicalHUB, as well as partner hubs in Moldova and the Baltic States, asylum services, and direct social support services. HelpNowHUB Services help Ukrainian refugees representing key populations access treatment-related information and support in host countries.



AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2023

37478

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL COORDINATED CASES THROUGH APH'S HELPNOW SERVICES

1. #HELPNOW SERVICES PER DIRECTIONS

20029



	For access to ARVs	6877	34,3%
	For access to OAT	1919	9,6%
	For Access to TB/Hepatitis	1447	7,2%
	For Access to Social Issues	7633	38,1%
	Other requests	2153	10,7%

2. #HELPNOWHUB AND PARTNER SERVICES:



#HelpNow Service
Total number of Requests
3851



#HelpNow Poland
Total number of Requests
10750



#HelpNow Germany
Total number of Requests
4316



#HelpNow Moldova
Total number of Requests (2022)
1017

4. TOTAL ONLINE MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS

15332

Since 2023 Supported by Help24

ONLINE CONSULTATIONS AT THE **HELP24 PLATFORM 2022/2023 – 3030**

ONLINE CONSULTATIONS USING OTHER MEANS OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION: **CELL PHONE, MESSENGERS (VIBER, TELEGRAM, WHATSAPP, ZOOM ETC) – 12302**

3. SHELTERS AND ADDRESS SOCIAL SUPPORT



About **1000** people used the services of shelters



Total address social support **190**



#HelpNow Baltia
Total number of Requests
1112

#HelpNow started its work on **1 march, 2022** — on the 6th day of the full-scale invasion

People from **50+ countries** and **200+ cities** received services

11. HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION

- **One third** of the **human rights violations against** groups vulnerable to HIV and TB recorded via the **REAct** system in January through November 2023 involved **people living with HIV** - 991 cases. In **18%** of all cases, PLHIV reported **disclosure of their HIV status**, in **16%** of all cases, they cited barriers to **outpatient and inpatient care**, and in **12%** - **domestic violence**. In **90%** of all recorded cases, the project's clients received **primary legal aid**.
- The trainings for law enforcement agencies, which covered, among other things, assuring the personal safety of police officers in the context of HIV infection, were attended by **2,230 participants**.

12. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

In 2023, with the support of the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF, UK) and Aidsfonds (the Netherlands), the Alliance regularly funded relevant initiatives advanced by communities vulnerable to HIV as follows:

- **227** mini-grants for action groups representing people who use drugs, PLHIV, transgender people, sex workers, ex-convicts, etc.) The average amount of a mini-grant was UAH 180,000. Using these mini-grants, 73,000 people, including 18,300 PLHIV, have met their needs for humanitarian packages or certificates for the purchase of food, hygiene products, medicines, etc., goods for children, or alternative power supplies.
- Regional humanitarian coordinators in 10 oblasts counseled or referred more than **20,000** members of vulnerable communities to providers of various types of assistance.
- Improvement of living conditions for vulnerable groups staying in special-purpose shelters (an independent energy audit of **10 shelters** was conducted to provide each shelter with relevant recommendations from auditors and the funds to carry out all necessary work to improve indoor energy efficiency).



13. INTERNATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE OF UKRAINE HIV AND TB RESPONSE DURING WAR



TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG!

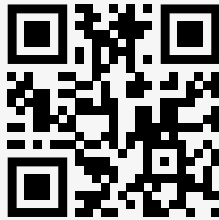
Alliance for Public Health expresses admiration and appreciation of the incredible work of all our partners, Network 100% Life, Public Health Center, Ministry of Health of Ukraine, all implementing partners, community and civil society networks, NGO staff and social workers, doctors and nurses! You are amazing!

All the great things we have achieved, we have achieved together! Big appreciation to governmental institutions, UN agencies and other international organizations.

We express sincere gratitude for critical support from our donors, your funding is critical for sustaining HIV and TB response in Ukraine as well as to addressing emerging needs caused by war! BIG THANKS to The Global Fund, US Government and PEPFAR, CDC, USAID, US NIDA, Yale University, FRONTLINE AIDS, Christian Aid, International AIDS Society (IAS), Stop TB Partnership/UNOPS, WHO, UNAIDS, FIND, EATG, Aidsfonds, International Renaissance Foundation, The Foundation to Promote Open Society, Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF), Irish Emergency Alliance, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Disasters Emergency Committee, Payoneer, Initiative France, UNITAID, Gilead, Act Church of Sweden (Svenska kyrkan) to all other donors and individuals provided private donations! Your support saves lives!

GREAT THANKS to Ukrainian Army defending not only Ukraine but also all fundamental principles of peace, freedom, sovereignty and dignity!

**TO SUPPORT OUR EMERGENCY EFFORTS,
PLEASE DONATE ANY AMOUNT OF MONEY HERE:**



<http://donate.aph.org.ua>

CONTACTS:

**Andriy KLEPIKOV,
Executive
Director**

klepikov@aph.org.ua
Cell: +38 050 334 8899
(also Viber, WhatsApp,
Telegram)

**Myroslava ANDRUSCHENKO,
Program Manager:
Policy and Advocacy**

andrushchenko@aph.org.ua
Cell: +38 067 232 4982
(also Viber, WhatsApp,
Telegram)

**Inna GAVRYLOVA,
PR & Communications
manager**

gavrylova@aph.org.ua
Cell: +32 469 184 192
Cell: +38 096 753-81-60
(also Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram)

www.aph.org.ua

FB: [AlliancePublicHealth](https://www.facebook.com/AlliancePublicHealth)

Instagram: [/aph.org.ua](https://www.instagram.com/aph.org.ua)

Twitter: [/allianceforph](https://twitter.com/allianceforph)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/alliance-for-public-health/>