

SUPPORT TO UKRAINE FOR DEVELOPING A MODERN PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

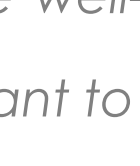
A project funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium composed of the GFA Consulting Group GmbH, Hamburg, and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki. The project supports consolidation and empowerment of the Public Health Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (UPHC) and supports the creation of a modern blood safety system in Ukraine.

Project newsletter
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Ukraine is a strategic partner for the EU as expressed in the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and our ongoing policy dialogue and programmes in the framework of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy.

We believe that health reform is among the most important reforms of the country. It directly impacts all Ukrainian citizens. Building a modern European public health system with a strong focus on disease prevention, which has the well-being of all citizens as its core, has to be an absolute priority. Through our support, we want to share the best international practices, assist in updating Ukrainian legislation and firmly implant a modern approach to public health in the Ukrainian reality.

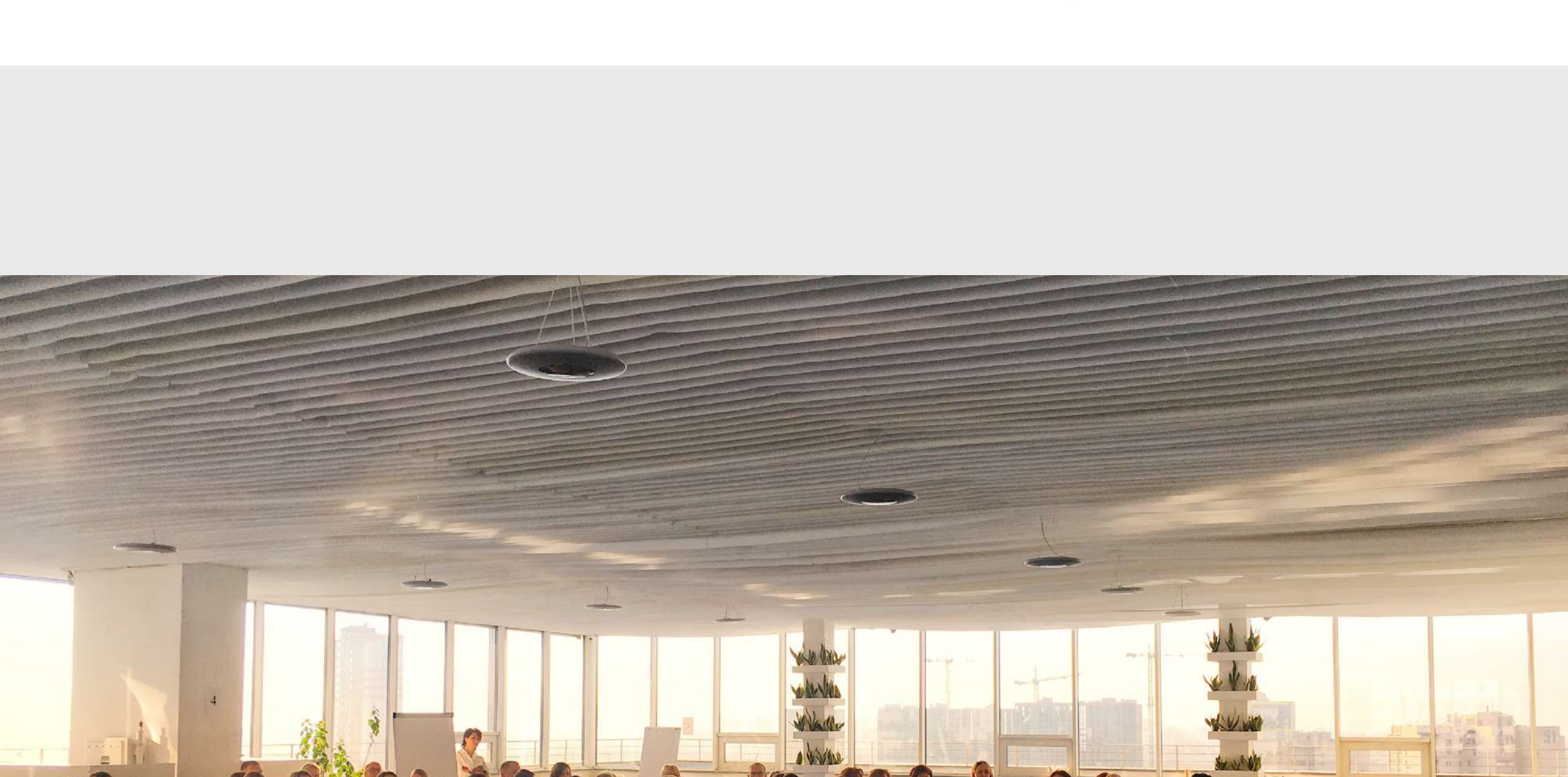
We hope the project will contribute to improving health governance and creating an efficient public health system, where all actors work towards the same goal: delivering high quality public health functions to all Ukrainians. On behalf of the EU Delegation in Kyiv, I wish to the project implementing consortium meaningful and fruitful collaboration with all national and international stakeholders and partners.



Kick-off event of the Project

On December 12, 2019, a kick-off event marking the official launch of the project took place. The event hosted around 30 officials, diplomats and experts. Among them were the former Minister of Health Zoryana Skaletska together with other representatives of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine and of the Public Health Directorate along with representatives of the recipient – the Public Health Centre, the donor – the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, the implementing consortium GFA-THL, a well as partner projects and international organizations dealing with health issues in Ukraine.

The team leader, Dr Predrag Duric, and the key expert for blood safety system, Dr Mohammed Abouelfarag, presented the project objectives, activities and expected outcomes as well as achievements of the last months. "The purpose of the project is the alignment of the public health system in Ukraine with the European standards. As a result of the project, a sustainable epidemiological surveillance system for communicable and non-communicable diseases will be created. International Health Regulations aimed at preventing, protecting against, controlling, and providing a public health response to the international spread of diseases will be implemented. The new national health system will become a reliable guarantee for the protection of the health of every Ukrainian", - underlined Dr Predrag Duric.



Strategic Session of the UPHC

On November 26, 2019, a strategic session of the Public Health Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (UPHC) was held with the support of the EU-funded project "Support to Ukraine for developing a modern Public Health System".

The project team leader outlined the areas of cooperation between the project and UPHC and presented an action plan for the next three years. Dr Volodymyr Kurpita, the UPHC former Director General, presented the results of the previous strategic sessions: the UPHC's vision and mission that may serve as the basis for the formulation of core values and goals.

Subsequently, UPHC core values that had won the majority of UPHC staff votes, were identified. Finally, each UPHC department provided a letter with adjusted strategic goals, indicating the direction in which each department has aimed in its strategic development.

In total, more than 100 UPHC specialists participated in the session.



Regional Public Health Program Planning Workshop for 2020-2022

On December 3-4, 2019, a workshop on the planning of regional public health programmes for 2020-2022 organized by the UPHC took place in Kyiv. It was an opportunity for the team leader to present the project objectives and activities.

The event within the framework of the project implementation brought together the leadership of 21 regional public health centres (rPHCs). Speakers included both national-level experts - representatives of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine and regional public health centres - and international level - representatives of WHO, USAID and staff of the EU-funded project "Support to Ukraine for developing a modern Public Health System".

The participants were informed about experiences on developing and approving oblast public health programmes in Rivne and Sumy and about national public health priorities for 2020, the European action plan on capacity-building and public health services, and public health support projects in Ukraine. The workshop participants also gained critical practical skills in assessing regional public health needs, situational analysis and prioritization of the goals of the public health programme, developing the logic of a local programme, finding solutions to address priority issues for regions, etc.



Support to the Drafting of the New Public Health Law

Under the project umbrella, several meetings of the Working Group (WG) on drafting a law on the public health system in Ukraine comprising experts from EU Delegation, MoH, UPHC, WHO, CDC and the project took place during November and December 2019. The objective of the meetings was to facilitate work on the draft law to support its compliance with the laws, requirements and practices of the EU to be further registered and adopted in Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

The fruitful discussions of the working group allowed to proceed with the revision and drafting of a new law on public health in line with the EU acquis, requirements and practices. As a result of the meetings, a number of amendments was included in the draft law and some areas for improvement were identified.

The adoption of the law on public health system is an important step for the implementation of Chapter 22 of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, which envisages harmonisation of Ukraine's legislation and practices in the health sector with those in the EU. Chapter 22 also refers to a broader cooperation on health reforms, in particular, regarding communicable diseases, blood safety and tobacco control.



Webinar on Assessment of Regional Blood Establishments using EuBIS Tool

From 18 to 19 December 2019, the webinar on assessment of regional blood establishments using the EuBIS tool was held. The NKEs (non-key experts) prepared presentations on quality management in the blood service, international requirements, standards for blood service, guidance and good management practices. The webinar audience included representatives of 13 oblast blood centres who received EuBIS questionnaire for self-assessment. The physical assessment is to be completed by March 2020.

The safety and availability of blood supplies have direct implications on public health. Therefore, the establishment of the National Blood System in Ukraine should rely on adequate organisation, capacity and safety standards. By committing to transpose blood safety related EU directives to national legislation, Ukraine provides a possibility to ensure a higher levels of Public Health protection for the population.

The development strategy of the national blood system for the period up to 2022 provides reorganisation of the blood system at three levels: national, regional and hospital. The reorganisation at the national level foresees the establishment of a competent national authority regulating functions of the blood supply system and supervising the establishment of national transfusion centre, thereby performing functions such as service provision management, coordination and monitoring. At the regional level, it is envisaged to create a number of regional blood centres, which will perform all technical operations of blood transfusion, starting from donor recruitment and ending with issuance of blood and blood components for clinical use at hospitals. At the hospital level, the reorganisation aims at creating a set of hospital blood banks within health care institutions to cover the clinical part of the blood transfusion cycle. Therefore, 12 regional blood establishments and one blood centre in Kyiv were visited and assessed by NKEs using EuBIS tool.



Legislation Review within the Blood Safety System

The project is working on defining and developing a new legal framework for the blood transfusion system in Ukraine that is capturing international best practices aligned with EU requirements. The new system will ensure a sustainable safe supply of blood and blood components for the entire population. In addition, the project is collaborating with the MoH and other stakeholders to develop roadmaps for implementation of national strategy for a comprehensive blood supply system until 2022.



Interview with Mr. Marko Lähteenmäki

Mr. Lähteenmäki is an international senior non-key expert in communication, who is working for the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, member of the implementing consortium. Marko is working on the communication component of this project and supports different activities, such as development of the UPHC communication strategy, analysis and improvement of the communication capacity of UPHC and also supports training interventions in this field.

What are the main goals of the communication component?

Main goals for communication component are to support UPHC and regional public health centres in building up their communication capacities. We do so by organizing communication trainings and developing good practices for health communication which could be adapted throughout the country together with UPHC.

What are the main challenges of the project communication component?

Most of the regional public health centres are new so the role of those organisations can still be a bit unclear for stakeholders. Also, the level of communications resources and capacities varies a lot between regions. That makes concrete planning of different communication activities a bit challenging.

What kind of international communication experience on public health reform can be used in Ukraine?

The level of knowledge varies but communication challenges in public health issues are pretty much the same in most of the developed and developing countries. I think there is a lot to learn simply by sharing good practices between public health institutes. Also, WHO and ECDC share lots of communication materials on different topics on their websites. Those materials can be very useful also in national use.

How will the project raise public awareness about the reform activities in the area of the national blood system, namely in blood safety and blood donation?

We aim to raise these questions in a public debate whenever the project gets new results. In addition, we will organise two public awareness campaigns together with UPHC, one on diabetes and one on blood safety. At the same time, we are going to create a campaign planning format which the regional public health centres can utilise in the future.

What are the possible ways to improve and enhance the communication capacities of the UPHC and rPHCs?

I would say that strengthening the cooperation between the centres is the key to successful communication. It is important to use similar processes and messages throughout the country to build up the trust and reputation of public health system in Ukraine. It also saves resources when each centre does not need to develop their own practices.



Interview with Ms Valeriya Salo

Ms Salo is Head of the Communication Department at the Public Health Center of the MoH of Ukraine, and therefore responsible for public relations and communications within public health reform.

What challenges today is facing public health reform in Ukraine?

The main challenge for health care reform in Ukraine is to restore the patient's trust in the doctor and the doctor's faith in the state.

What aspects of the reform are particularly in need of communication, and why?

Undoubtedly, it is building a public health system. This is where the most significant shift happens: our health is first and foremost our choice, and only then the quality of medicine.

What excites people in Ukraine most about public health reform?

Every change has an unknown element. At present, it is mostly unknown to the public how exactly an updated system will be organized to ensure everyone's right to health care.

What innovations are important and necessary?

Public funding for health care services, the introduction of the E-health system, the ranking of doctors, and the promotion of the state by the professional development of the medical community are needed. It is also worth highlighting the development of a regional public health system as a new institution in the medical field, whose primary objective is to raise awareness of the population about the ability to prevent illness and the importance of preventing disease first.

What kind of support do you expect from the EU-funded project "Support to Ukraine for Developing a Modern Public Health System"?

Expert support from countries that have successfully completed these steps is precious to us. We will be grateful for any form of assistance that the project can provide.

The overall project's objective is to support the modernization and development of a sustainable Public Health System that is able to ensure disease prevention and control standards in line with EU legislation, requirements, and practices. The project shall contribute to strengthening national leadership and capacity in Public Health policy programming and implementation. The project supports the consolidation and empowerment of the newly created Public Health Centre of Ukraine (UPHC) and supports the creation of a modern Blood Safety System in Ukraine.