SAFEMED SUPPORTED A PILOT PROJECT INITIATED BY CPA ON THE USE OF E-CATALOG

Throughout June-July 2021, SAFEMed provided technical support to CPA in implementation of a pilot project on expanding use of e-catalog in regional settings. E-catalog is an electronic procurement tool for use by public customers to conduct procurements up to a 200,000 UAH threshold using a simplified procedure according to the Law of Ukraine “On Public Procurements”. A key focus of the project is to demonstrate an approach of generating demand for e-catalog and other regional agreements through more intensive engagement with current and potential public customers at regional and sub-regional levels. In the coming month, CPA, with SAFEMed support, will develop a national strategy for e-catalog promotion building on a deeper understanding of the barriers to use learned during the pilot.

The pilot project took place in three PEPFAR regions - Poltava, Odessa, and Zaporizhzhya. The program included three webinars introducing CPA, its role in the national healthcare commodities space, and the range of services available to regional clients. As a key focus, e-catalog was presented with detailed description of the product range as well as tool features and functions. A separate webinar was devoted to frequently asked questions (FAQs) and dialog with public customers. Overall, 171 public customer representatives participated in the pilot project webinars and shared their experience through surveys. Additionally, 14 regional representatives participated in in-depth interviews designed to further analyze the reasons why public entities use the tool (and highlight them in communication and promotion of the e-catalog) or the obstacles that prevent them from using it (and to improve them, where possible).

ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL WAREHOUSES WILL FACILITATE THE REINFORCEMENT OF A NATIONAL LOGISTICS SYSTEM

SAFEMed recently completed an independent assessment of compliance to Ukrainian legislation of the network of regional-level warehouses for storing medicines for HIV/AIDS, TB, and viral hepatitis treatment. Analysis of the regional warehouses’ capacity was necessary to identify existing gaps and generate recommendations for the MOH, CPH, and regional health administrations.

Through an open competitive tender, SAFEMed along with a CPH expert, selected a private vendor, Kreston GCG, to conduct the assessment. Kreston is an international company with extensive experience performing comprehensive audits on compliance with the Good Practices of leading pharmaceutical companies and regulatory authorities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. CPH, SAFEMed, and Kreston jointly developed a comprehensive checklist for the assessment that was used during onsite monitoring visits of 79 regional sites preliminarily listed by CPH. SAFEMed sought input on the checklist from CPA to ensure the tool reflected the needs of the national procurement agency.
Kreston conducted onsite monitoring visits in April-May 2021 to all sites across Ukraine. Their team assessed the sites using the checklist that includes various aspects of storing medicines such as temperature control, quality, security, and the condition of the storage room. Once visits were completed, Kreston submitted a report summarizing findings and recommendations for improvement. Their findings highlighted the need for improved data management and monitoring of use of medicines as well as the need for capacity-building for regional warehouse personnel. These recommendations for the MOH, CPH, CPA, and regional health administrations will be instrumental in reinforcing a more robust comprehensive national logistics system for Ukraine and will include identification of opportunities for private sector engagement in the warehousing field. SAFEMed will share assessment findings and recommendations with key stakeholders during an upcoming dissemination event to facilitate collaborative action planning to address identified gaps.

The National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU) launched the first stage of the insulin reimbursement program on July 1. Inspired by the overall success of the Affordable Medicines Program, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (MOH) asked SAFEMed for technical support in the development of the insulin reimbursement module in 2019. It is envisioned that the insulin module would rely on ePrescription and an External Reference Pricing (ERP)-based pricing mechanism to bring increased access to affordable medicines to even more patients across Ukraine. As part of this program, SAFEMed facilitated dialog with endocrinologists, family doctors, insulin manufacturers, pharmacies, distributors, government officials, and academics. As a result, in 2020, SAFEMed provided the MOH and NHSU with new patient clinical pathways and categorizations, insulin categorization, pricing mechanism based on ERP, and advanced ePrescription technical requirements. Additionally, SAFEMed supported the NHSU academy and Ukrainian endocrinologists’ association in the development of training materials for the endocrinologists and family doctors to increase their awareness and expertise in modern trends in care of insulin-dependent patients. Endocrinologists and family doctors have already successfully passed the online course located at the NHSU academy website, and are now poised to begin the new program.

Understanding the complexity of the insulin reimbursement module and taking into consideration the sensitivity of insulin-dependent patients’ care, the government of Ukraine decided to phase the implementation of insulin reimbursement in two stages. During the first stage, successfully launched this month, endocrinologists are beginning to transfer all patients’ medical records to eHealth using new patients’ categorization. Endocrinologists and family doctors are starting to coordinate treatment of insulin-dependent patients through a digital care plan, which will provide better control on the prescription. The second phase of the NHSU insulin reimbursement implementation is scheduled for October 1, 2021. It will include NHSU contracting with pharmacies and health facilities and will cover the cost of insulin with ePrescription. SAFEMed and NHSU are developing reimbursement promotional materials to support program recognition.

SAFEMed congratulates the MOH and NHSU with the launch of the insulin reimbursement campaign and thanks doctors, patients, the pharmaceutical industry, and academics for common effort in helping make Ukrainian insulin-dependent patients’ lives better.