



SAFE, AFFORDABLE, AND EFFECTIVE MEDICINES FOR UKRAINIANS (SAFEMed) ACTIVITY

MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST

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SAFEMED SUPPORTS DISTRIBUTION OF MMR VACCINES FOR CATCH-UP CAMPAIGN AND ROUTINE IMMUNIZATIONS

USAID's SAFEMed Activity helped quickly distribute 334,690 doses of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccines from the national to regional level to support the MMR catch-up campaign that started on Monday, July 17th. The vaccines were delivered to 24 regions to ensure stock levels were sufficient before the catch-up campaign kicked off. These vaccines were primarily delivered to the regional centers for disease control (rCDCs) since these institutions recently took over management of the regional immunization program.

The Ministry of Health of Ukraine (MOH) hosted several meetings with the regions to present an implementation plan and communication framework for the catch-up campaign. SAFEMed assisted with the storage and transportation of the vaccines at the regional level and provided general guidance to regional vaccine logistics coordinators. The comprehensive communication campaign aims to protect children who missed vaccination because of war threats of external and internal migration or because of limited access to vaccination points due to constant shelling or damage. Following MOH recommendations, rCDCs also started communication campaigns at the regional level. These campaigns will help MOH reach the campaign goal of vaccinating more than 260,000 children.

SAFEMed will also support storage services for more than 300,000 doses of the MMR vaccines at the national level. This will serve as safety stock to be used for further distributions upon the region's request and help minimize the possibility of re-distribution among regions. To further minimize logistics costs and increase efficiency of rCDCs operations, SAFEMed combined the delivery of MMR vaccines with other routine vaccines, along with those for COVID-19. This included the delivery of oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) (262,400 doses); inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) (156,960 doses); and trivalent vaccine combining diphtheria toxin, tetanus toxin and whole-cell pertussis vaccine (DTwP) (120,000 doses), together with Janssen (800 doses) and Pfizer (25,930 doses).

MOH AND PHARMACEUTICAL REPRESENTATIVES SIGN MEMORANDUM ON NATIONAL MEDICINES VERIFICATION SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION



The Ministry of Health of Ukraine (MOH), with support from SAFEMed, hosted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signing ceremony on July 3rd, marking a step forward toward creating a national medicines verification organization and system in Ukraine. The MOH along with eleven representatives from the pharmaceutical industry signed the memorandum, which serves as an agreement among all parties to work together to implement the provisions of Article 57 of the Law of Ukraine, "On Medicinal Products," dated July 28th, 2022, No. 2469-X, to combat falsification of medicinal products. With this memorandum in place, the MOH and partner representatives can begin working to create a comprehensive

About SAFEMed

Our work in Ukraine aims to boost transparency, improve cost efficiency, and strengthen the pharmaceutical supply chain, ultimately leading to better availability and use of essential medicines and health commodities for TB, HIV and AIDS, COVID-19, and noncommunicable diseases. We support the Government of Ukraine in its ongoing efforts to reform its health care system in the wake of the war.

national medicines verification and serialization system as well as establish a national organization responsible for the system and its associated information system.

As a key next step, responsible parties will seek legal support from SAFEMed to help finalize and adopt the resolution for the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. This Decree will regulate the issue of verification of medicinal products with 2D coding. Industry leaders, with ongoing engagement from the MOH, will be leading the creation of the National Organization for the Verification of Medicinal Products, handling preparation of relevant IT solutions, and communicating with the European Commission regarding joining the Eurohub, the main purpose of which is to serve as the principle place for storage of master data and as a gateway for the transmission of manufacturer data to the national and national Blueprint systems.

MSH DELEGATION TRAVELS TO KYIV, UKRAINE

From June 24–29, MSH Vice President, Global Health Systems Innovation (GHSI), Dr. Dan Schwarz; MSH Technical Director, Health Systems Strengthening, René Berger; and SAFEMed Chief of Party, Rebecca Kohler, traveled to Ukraine's capital of Kyiv for the first time since Russia's full-scale invasion. During the week, the travelers along with SAFEMed Deputy Chief of Party, Sergey Strashuk, held meetings with key governmental and international partners. The Minister of Health, Viktor Liashko Laiko, and USAID/Ukraine Deputy Director, Susan Kutor, met with the MSH delegation to share the Government of Ukraine's priorities for the coming year as the country looks toward the end of the war, recovery, and eventual integration with the European Union.



In addition, the MSH delegation held meetings with several deputy ministers of health, who are responsible for different aspects of pharmaceutical and supply chain strengthening in the country, and met with the heads of key health agencies that collaborate with the project. These include the National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU), the Medical Procurement of Ukraine (MPU), the Center for Public Health (CPH), and the State Expert Center (SEC).

The group also dedicated time to hear directly from all the Kyiv-based project staff about the day-to-day realities of successfully implementing a technical assistance project in the midst of an active war.

MOH AND SAFEMED ORGANIZE NATIONAL HTA FORUM

The 4th National Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Forum took place on May 31st, bringing together over 170 on- and off-line participants along with national and international experts to discuss **HTA over the past four years in Ukraine** and identify actions to scale up HTA implementation efforts. A key focus of the daylong event was reviewing progress on the Ukraine HTA Roadmap and identifying areas for continued improvement of HTA as a tool for transparent, evidence-based decision making.

There were a few key takeaways from the forum. First, the HTA roadmap, which was developed with SAFEMed support, is instrumental for institutionalizing HTA and moving forward. Participants recommended that the roadmap be updated to reflect the intention of the MOH to move quickly to establish an independent agency. Second, while the MOH strongly supports an independent agency and a recent Ukraine Anti-Monopoly Committee report calls for this, some concerns remain about how to transition from the current structure and regarding the funding this agency would require. Based on this feedback, further deliberation is needed to improve the decision-making process. Gaps noted in the current process include the need for clear criteria for the appraisal committee work, membership and scope of work for the committee members, and the alignment of several processes in the decision making around HTA, national list, nomenclature, and use of managed entry agreements (MEA). Lastly, the current implementation and use of MEA in Ukraine is promising but requires improvements in the selection of candidate medicines for MEA and in monitoring the impact of the agreements.

STAY TUNED FOR THE NEXT DIGEST

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