



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

MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST

JUNE 2024



NHSU HOLDS REGIONAL MEETINGS TO ASSESS AMP PROGRESS

On June 5, the National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU) Affordable Medicines Program (AMP) team was supported by USAID's SAFEMed Activity to conduct two sessions on the AMP. The first session gathered 120 primary care physicians from across the region and explored strategic directions for AMP development and sustainability, as well as the pivotal role primary health care physician's play in patient access to free medicines. The second session, tailored for specialists and pharmacists, highlighted their unique contribution to the AMP's implementation. Key strategic directions for the program in the coming year include expanding number of pharmacies participating in the program especially in remote areas, training programs for doctors and pharmacists to increase their engagement in the program, and strategic expansion in range of medications covered even existing disease treatments. Halyna Nahorna, NHSU Communications Head, moderated both meetings.



NHSU Head Nataliia Husak, First Deputy Head of the Kirovohrad Regional State Administration Pavlo Konopko, and SAFEMed Technical Advisor Anna Bezruk gave opening remarks in both sessions. Ms. Husak underscored the AMP's significance as a primary source of medication for patients with chronic diseases in Kirovohrad Oblast. NHSU core staff Natalia Hnatiuk and Ihor Kostyria shared insights into the AMP's implementation with attendees. Furthermore, Yevgeniya Melnyk introduced the NHSU Academy, while Oksana Shkil discussed the contracting process with NHSU.

The meetings concluded with a discussion addressing eHealth system specifics, patient access, and program expansion. Similar sessions are planned for other regions to further engage health workers critical to the AMP's success.

SEC AND SAFEMED HIGHLIGHT ACHIEVEMENTS AT HTAI ANNUAL MEETING



On June 15-19, the Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) Annual Meeting, themed "A Turning Point for HTA? Sustainability, Networks, and Innovations," drew approximately 1,000 participants from around the globe. Over four days, workshops, presentations, posters, and panels were held on various topics within HTA such as rare diseases, hospital-based HTA, artificial intelligence in HTA, role of patient organizations in HTA, and HTA and sustainable health systems.

SAFEMed supported the attendance of State Expert Center (SEC) HTA Department Head Oresta Pinyazhko and enabled other staff members to attend virtually. Ms. Pinyazhko presented the poster "Improving Patient Access to Medicines through HTA in Ukraine: Measuring the Impact of the National HTA Roadmap" and served as a panelist in "Advancing HTA Worldwide: Insights from Global Initiatives" and "International Networks for Equity and Resilience: Building Bridges for Efficient and Sustainable Healthcare Systems." She also moderated the session, "Evaluating Health Interventions: Cost-Effectiveness, Quality of Life, and Policy Implications."

SAFEMed's technical experts showcased two virtual posters, "Step-by-Step Introduction of HB-HTA in Ukraine" and "HTA Training Program in Ukraine: An Example of Collaborative Capacity Building." These presentations highlighted ongoing SAFEMed initiatives to enhance HTA practices and patient access to medicines in Ukraine.

About SAFEMed

The Safe, Affordable, and Effective Medicines (SAFEMed) for Ukrainians Activity is designed to support the Government of Ukraine in its ongoing efforts to reform its health care system and expand access to affordable and reliable medicines. With support from USAID and PEPFAR, MSH provides technical and legal assistance to strengthen Ukraine's pharmaceutical sector. 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.

SAFEMED SUPPORTS MOH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING DEVOTED TO ESTABLISHING THE SCA

The Ministry of Health (MOH) formed an Advisory Board to provide guidance and international insight into its ambitious agenda of establishing a unified, transparent medicines regulatory body, known as the State Control Authority (SCA). The second Advisory Board meeting convened on June 19 at MOH offices. Members of the Advisory Board include:

- Lembit Rago, MD, PhD, Secretary-General of the Council for International Organization of Medical Sciences (CIOMS)
- Rainer Becker, Medical Products and Innovation Director; Directorate-General for Health, and Food Safety of EU Commission (European Commission)
- Robin Martz, Health Office Director USAID/Ukraine
- Martin Harvey, Head of International Affairs, European Medicines Agency
- Krzysztof Landa, Ex-Deputy Minister of Health of Poland, responsible for medicines policies and strategy
- Olha Stefanyshyna, Member of Parliament of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, IX convocation, member of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Health of the Nation, Medical Assistance, and Medical Insurance
- Roman Vashchuk, Business ombudsman of Ukraine

Maryna Slobodnichenko, Deputy Minister of Health for European Integration, chaired the meeting. Ms. Slobodnichenko presented the MOH strategy for the establishment of the SCA, a timeline for implementing the Law on Medicinal Products, and the status of the European Union (EU) Twinning project. She shared further updates on the preparations already in place, like the building of IT infrastructure, budget plans, transparent selection procedures for the senior leadership of the new body, staff training, and the WHO regulatory systems Global Benchmarking Tool. The Deputy Minister closed by sharing the status of nine priority draft legislative acts focused on regulatory frameworks.

Yulia Zarudska, director of the Department of Quality Control of Medicines and Blood, State Service of Medicines and Drug Control, presented a new concept for laboratory control of medicine quality in Ukraine. She pointed out the shortage in the numbers of laboratories, noting that Ukraine will shift to the risk-based approach of quality of medicines. She explained as state control over importation is phased out, quality control will be introduced for third country importers, excepting EU and countries with strict regulatory authority. This discussion paved the way for establishing a transparent and effective SCA.

SAFEMED SUPPORTS ASSESSMENT OF OST MEDICINE STORAGE ACROSS UKRAINE

With input from the Global Fund (GF), SAFEMed alongside the Center for Public Health (CPH) assessed the storage conditions for opioid substitution therapy (OST). The assessment encompassed central, regional, and health care facility warehouses and focused on adherence to Ukrainian legislation, international standards, and best practices. Key areas of scrutiny included security measures, temperature control, and adherence to the First Expiry, First Out (FEFO) principle.

Regional and subregional warehouse facilities in Vinnytsia, Odesa, Rivne, Kherson, Cherkassy, and Chernihiv, as well as two national warehouses in Kyiv, were assessed over a two-month period. Final reports highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of each warehouse and indicated that national warehouses have the most favorable conditions. Subregional warehouses received slightly lower scores, while regional warehouses ranked third.

On June 21, SAFEMed shared key findings from these reports during an online session with representatives from the CPH, USAID, and GF. Assessment results revealed significant variability in compliance across different tiers of health care facilities. For example, national warehouses exhibited stronger performance in infrastructure, staff training, and regulatory adherence. Areas for improvement include risk management, quality assurance, and environmental sustainability. SAFEMed underscored the legal complexities related to managing humanitarian aid and the need to promote local procurement to support these warehouses in reaching higher levels of compliance.

NEW VIDEO ON SUPPLY CHAIN

With support from SAFEMed, the Medical Procurement of Ukraine (MPU) has become the backbone to the country's health supply chain. A new video highlights how the agency ensures lifesaving medicines and vaccines are safely stored and quickly distributed to the hospitals and facilities where they're needed most across Ukraine.

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

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