



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

MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST

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HOW UKRAINE ENSURES VACCINATION CONTINUITY DURING WAR

Since 2020, Ukraine's healthcare system has weathered the dual crises of a global pandemic and a full-scale war. Despite these pressures, ensuring continued immunization and preventing vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks remain top priorities.

In 2021, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (MOH) and the Center for Public Health (CPH) established a network of Regional Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (rCDCs) covering all 24 regions and Kyiv City. The USAID/SAFEMed Activity helped create the regulatory framework related to supply chain issues and establish a reliable storage and transportation system, ensuring adherence to cold chain logistics to safeguard vaccine quality.

On April 15, the MOH and CPH, with SAFEMed support, conducted a monitoring visit to the Kyiv City CDC—part of a broader effort to identify the root causes of existing challenges in immunization program management and vaccine distribution, assess current performance, and strengthen the capacity of regional experts and healthcare staff. These visits also ensure a direct feedback loop to inform national-level decisions, gathering insights to support the development of effective coordination and communication systems across all levels of care.

The delegation, which also included representatives from USAID Ukraine, visited the rCDC offices, a modern vaccine warehouse, and several health facilities delivering vaccination services. Discussions emphasized ensuring vaccine quality and safe storage, and the role of international technical assistance in improving coordination, logistics, and staff capacity—even amid the war.



Robin Martz, Director of the USAID Health Office in Ukraine, and Yulia Shigorina, SAFEMed Translator, during the monitoring visit.

Photo credit: USAID/SAFEMed

Ukraine's commitment to public health is clear: immunization remains a priority, and the established vaccine supply system helps protect both children and adults from preventable diseases, and ensures medicines reach the people who need them.

LEARN MORE: STRENGTHENING THE SUPPLY CHAIN SYSTEM FOR THE COVID-19 RESPONSE AND IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

ESTABLISHING UKRAINE'S STATE CONTROL AUTHORITY: THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS A PHARMACEUTICAL HUB



Maryna Slobodnichenko, Deputy Minister of Health, led the meeting, alongside Mykhailo Babenko, Head of the State Expert Center of Ukraine, and Mykhailo Radutskyi, Chair of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Health.

Photo credit: USAID/SAFEMed

Ukraine has the potential to become a regional pharmaceutical hub—boosting economic resilience while expanding access to high-quality medicines at home and abroad. But unlocking this potential requires reform, starting with a strong, independent regulatory body.

On April 24, SAFEMed supported the fourth meeting of the Advisory Board on the creation of the State Control Authority (SCA) in Ukraine's pharmaceutical sector. This new government body will oversee the regulation of medicines, medical devices, blood products, narcotics, cosmetics, and substances of human origin. The MOH presented a roadmap to formally launch the SCA by January 1, 2027.

Led by Deputy Minister Maryna Slobodnichenko, the meeting brought together key government leaders, members of the Verkhovna Rada, and international experts including representatives from the European Medicines Agency and the Council of International Organizations of Medical Sciences. Discussions covered the next critical steps, including amendments to the Law on Medicines, the future regulatory body's financial model, organizational structures, staffing, anti-corruption mechanisms, and digital infrastructure.

Mykhailo Radutskyi, Chair of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Health, emphasized the importance of the SCA not only for the development of the pharmaceutical sector but also for maintaining sustainable connections with international markets. "According to the State Tax Service of Ukraine, the pharmaceutical market is the fifth largest in terms of tax payments among all industries, reflecting the scale and potential of the sector as a reliable partner for international institutions."

By supporting the development of a transparent, efficient regulatory body, SAFEMed is helping Ukraine align with global standards and take a critical step toward long-term health system sustainability.

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.

UKRAINE MODERNIZES DIGITAL HEALTH REGISTRIES TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH SYSTEM TRANSPARENCY AND SAFETY

A reliable, centralized source of information on medicines and medical devices is essential for patient safety, clinical decision-making, and effective public procurement. That's why the MOH, with technical support from SAFEMed, is modernizing its National Registries of Medicines and Medical Devices — critical digital databases that list all medical products and devices authorized for use in the country.

Strengthening these registries advances Ukraine's healthcare system by supporting the harmonization of national legislation with international standards, enabling the integration of data on registered medicinal products into the other national digital systems, preparing the groundwork for international data exchange, and ensuring consistent, standardized information that facilitates interoperability across all healthcare platforms.

The MOH achieved an important milestone in April 2025 in further aligning its National Registry of Medicines Devices with international practice. SAFEMed's experts drafted the technical specifications, referred to as the technical requirements document, which will serve as the basis for the integration of the national registry with the European Medical Device Nomenclature — an international system for classifying medical devices in a standardized way. Use of standardized categories and naming conventions, encourages broader supplier participation especially from outside of Ukraine, increases accuracy, reduces costs, and expands access to quality products. The MOH approved the requirements documentation and later received positive feedback from the Ministry of Digital Transformation who reviewed them for compliance with Ukraine's newly adopted state standards on IT systems development. The next step will be to design the system using these specifications, set to begin in the coming year.

These advancements are a practical leap forward toward Ukraine's digital health transformation. For patients, this means safer, better-regulated medicines and devices. For the health system, it means greater efficiency, stronger governance, and alignment with global best practices. Stay tuned for more progress toward a smarter, more resilient healthcare infrastructure.

ENSURING MEDICINE SAFETY IN UKRAINE: ADVANCING THE VERIFICATION SYSTEM

Falsified medicines pose significant risks to public health and safety and erode trust in the healthcare system. With SAFEMed support, Ukraine is building a solid foundation for a national medicine verification system—focused on regulatory reforms and the infrastructure needed to ensure pharmaceutical safety.

To further advance the practical implementation of the medicine verification system in Ukraine, various stakeholders gathered to discuss the technical aspects of applying 2D-coding for pharmaceuticals—key tools for improving regulatory oversight and preventing counterfeit products. This collaborative effort reflects Ukraine's commitment to aligning with international standards and ensuring the safety of medicines. On April 10, SAFEMed and the European Business Association co-hosted an online meeting to advance these technical specifications. The meeting brought together 25 stakeholders from the pharmaceutical industry, government, and legal sector to discuss serialization and traceability.

This effort builds on the Cabinet of Ministers' Decree #1121, dated September 26, 2024, on medicines verification. Developed with support from SAFEMed, this regulation requires manufacturers to apply security features, such as 2D coding, to medicine packaging. Its implementation will begin on a voluntary basis in 2026 and become mandatory by 2028. Experts from Abbott, including Marcel de Grutter and Matthieu Thibaud, presented technical requirements for serialization, including assigning each product a unique serial number, using GSI data matrix codes, and enabling full traceability across the supply chain.

These discussions mark a significant step toward launching a pilot initiative and refining Ukraine's strategy for nationwide implementation. With continued support from SAFEMed and international partners, Ukraine is advancing toward a safer, more transparent pharmaceutical market that aligns with global standards and protects patients across the country.



LEARN MORE: IMPLEMENTATION OF A MEDICINES VERIFICATION SYSTEM TO FIGHT FALSIFIED PRODUCTS IN UKRAINE

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