

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

MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST

AUGUST 2025



EIGHT YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP: ADVANCING SAFE AFFORDABLE MEDICINES IN UKRAINE

On August 14, the US Government-funded Safe, Affordable, and Effective Medicines for Ukrainians (SAFEMed) Activity celebrated eight years of partnership with Ukraine at the American University Kyiv. The event brought together nearly 100 participants, including representatives from the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the National Health Service of Ukraine, Medical Procurement of Ukraine, the Public Health Center, the State Service of Ukraine on Medicines and Drugs Control, the State Expert Center, members of Parliament, international and Ukrainian partners, and media.

Special guests included representatives of the US Embassy, led by Jeffrey Giauque, Assistance Coordinator, and Mykhailo Radutskyi, the Chair of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on National Health. Ukrainian journalist Marichka Padalko moderated the event.



Photo credit: SAFEMed.
Photographer: Oleksandr Tsybin.



Special guests included representatives of the U.S. Embassy, led by Jeffrey Giauque, Assistance Coordinator.
Photographer: Oleksandr Tsybin.

The event highlighted eight years of collaboration that has modernized pharmaceutical systems and expanded equitable access to medicines across the country—even in times of war. From transparent procurement reforms and the launch of the Affordable Medicines Program to the creation of digital tools and new delivery models for the most remote communities, the SAFEMed Activity has helped drive sustainable, systemwide change.

Reflecting on SAFEMed's role in advancing reforms, Mykhailo Radutskyi noted: "The greatest assistance we have received from the SAFEMed project is the support in creating a state-owned enterprise to oversee Ukraine's purchases. This made it possible for Ukrainian citizens to receive high-quality medicines, ensured their affordability, and, most importantly, allowed the state to save significant funds during martial law without reducing support for our citizens."

Rebecca Kohler, Chief of Party for SAFEMed, emphasized the program's enduring impact:

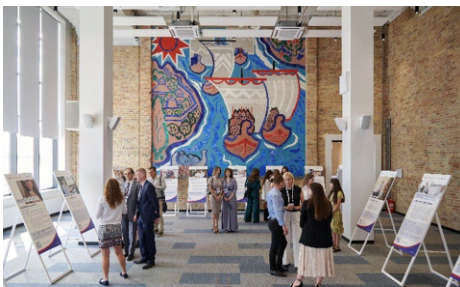
"When we started in 2017, we dreamed of a system where patients, even in the most remote corners of Ukraine, would have equal access to quality treatment. Today, we can see these changes clearly—we see Medical Procurement of Ukraine operating effectively, the Affordable Medicines Program expanding, Health Technology Assessment being implemented, and many other initiatives. We are passing on to Ukraine sustainable institutional capacity, digital tools, and a team of professionals who will continue this important work—work for even more open and fair access to treatment for every citizen."

Two panel discussions explored the depth and breadth of these achievements:

- "From Reform to Patient: The New Architecture of Pharmaceutical Regulation in Ukraine"
- "From Challenges to Systemic Change: Transforming Ukraine's Pharmaceutical Supply Chain"

Speakers emphasized how SAFEMed's support has strengthened the health system, making medicine procurement more efficient and transparent, ensuring uninterrupted supplies even during the war, and building modern digital tools and reliable regulatory mechanisms. These systemic reforms have made quality medicines more accessible and safer for millions of Ukrainians and stand as a model of effective collaboration between government institutions, international partners, and the private sector.

PHOTO EXHIBITION: STORIES OF CHANGE IN PICTURES



The photo exhibition "Eight Years of Change—Ukraine's Journey Toward to Safe and Affordable Medicines".
Photo credit: SAFEMed. Photographer: Oleksandr Tsybin.

A highlight of the event was the opening of a photo exhibition, Eight Years of Change — Ukraine's Journey Toward to Safe and Affordable Medicines. The exhibition features 15 stories of the patients, providers, and partners behind the transformation of Ukraine's pharmaceutical system.

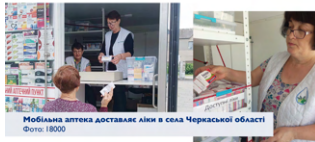
Through powerful images, the exhibition captures how, together with the Government of Ukraine, the US Government and SAFEMed partners have:

- Introduced transparent public procurement
- Expanded the Affordable Medicines Program
- Built digital tools to track and manage supply chains
- Delivered medicines to frontline areas
- Launched mobile pharmacies to reach remote communities

One story features Valentyna Nikolenko, General Director of the Cherkasy Regional Municipal Enterprise "Pharmacy," describing the launch of mobile pharmacies:

"When we saw that only 14% of villages in the Cherkasy region had access to stationary pharmacies, it became clear: most people were forced to search for even the most basic medicines. Thanks to the MOH's initiative, we were able to launch a critical solution—mobile pharmacies. For us, this is not about business or profit—it's about people. We took on this social initiative as a matter of civic responsibility. It wasn't an easy project. We were among the first in Ukraine to start outfitting pharmacy vehicles from scratch. There were no ready-made solutions—we had to figure out how to maintain temperature control, protect the medicines from dust and moisture, and organize the space in a way that was comfortable for pharmacists." Doctors, patients, and supply-chain professionals are featured throughout the exhibition, highlighting how partnership-driven reforms have made quality medicines more accessible and safer for millions of Ukrainians.

View the online version of the exhibition here: <https://msh.org/story/eight-years-of-driving-change/>



ВАЛЕНТИНА НІКОЛЕНКО,
генеральна директорка Черкаського обласного комунального підприємства «Фармація»

Коли ми побачили, що в Черкаській області лише 14% сіл мають доступ до стаціонарних аптек, стало очевидно: більшість людей змушені шукати, де дістати навіть базові ліки. Завдяки ініціативі Міністерства охорони здоров'я ми змогли реалізувати важливу ініціативу – запустити мобільні аптеки. Для нас це не про бізнес, це про безпеку – це про людей. Ми знали на собі, що соціальною ініціативою ми громадянське послужили.

Проект був непростий. Ми були однією з перших в Україні, хто почав обладнувати автомобільні аптеки з нуля. Не було готових рішень – на спеціально призначені, не адаптовані температурного режиму, не захистити ліки від пилу й вологоти, не грамотно організувати простір для роботи фармацевта.

Сьогодні в мобільних аптеках представлений повноцінний асортимент ліків, в тому числі ліки за проголошеною ціною. І найголовніше – пацієнти в найвіддаленіших селах отримують потрібні препарати швидко й без зайвих бар'єрів. Це – про реальний доступ і турботу, яку миши відчувають.

Медична допомога без кордонів: мобільні аптеки на службі у пацієнтів
На початку 2024 року перша мобільна аптека розпочала роботу у прифронтовій Харківській області, а потім – ще в 18 регіонах. Проект SAFEMed надає Міністерству охорони здоров'я технічну та координаційну підтримку для реалізації цієї ініціативи. SAFEMed також підтримує національну координаційну кампанію для підвищення обізнаності про роботу мобільних аптек, на сьогодні 1,5 мільйона українців.

One of the stands presented at the photo exhibition

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.

NEW TOOL STRENGTHENS HIV MEDICINE FORECASTING

Accurate planning for antiretroviral (ARV) medicines is essential to ensuring continuity of care for the more than 150,000 Ukrainians living with HIV. To strengthen Ukraine's ability to forecast and procure these lifesaving medicines, SAFEMed—together with the Center for Public Health (CPH) and Medical Procurement of Ukraine (MPU)—introduced a new digital quantification tool supported by the US Government.

From August 4 to 12, 2025, the SAFEMed team organized a series of three two-day trainings in Kyiv to help regional specialists master the tool. More than 40 doctors, nurses, and pharmacists from nearly every region of Ukraine gained practical skills in entering data, generating forecasts, and submitting procurement requests.

The sessions were highly interactive. Trainers demonstrated the tool step by step, while participants practiced each function, from entering data to generating regional requests. Open Q&A sessions with CPH experts fostered dialogue, helping participants troubleshoot technical issues and explore real-world applications.

By the end of the training series, participants had an average success rate of 89% on post-tests, signaling strong readiness to apply the tool in daily operations. The collaborative, hands-on approach also created a professional community committed to improving forecasting accuracy and strengthening the ARV supply system nationwide.



BREAKING STIGMA: UKRAINIANS SHARE THEIR STORIES



Olha Klymova, an infectious disease doctor at the CPH, during the filming of the video series

In collaboration with SAFEMed, the CPH prepared a video series to break the stigma around HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and hepatitis treatment. Produced by the creative agency Nudge, the series features real stories of Ukrainians—patients and providers alike—navigating the journey from diagnosis to treatment and recovery.

One participant, Dr. Natalia Hritsova, a TB specialist who herself was diagnosed with the disease, shared:

"I realized that I need to talk about it—to show by my own example. Unfortunately, even though we live in the 21st century, there are still many myths circulating in our society. They relate to many aspects, but above all, to a lack of awareness about this disease."

The series underscores a vital message: treatment for HIV, TB, and hepatitis in Ukraine is free, confidential, and accessible. By sharing these personal stories, the campaign encourages Ukrainians to seek diagnosis and care without fear or shame. The five videos will soon be available on CPH platforms, furthering the reach of this lifesaving message.

STAY TUNED FOR THE NEXT DIGEST

ua-safemed@safemedua.org

