



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

## MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST

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### OCTOBER 2025



## PEOPLE FIRST: HOW THE AFFORDABLE MEDICINES PROGRAM REACHES PATIENTS IN VOLYN

The next phase of the Affordable Medicines Program (AMP) was the focus of a regional meeting held on September 17 in Lutsk, Volyn region. The National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU), with support from SAFEMed, hosted more than 70 representatives of local authorities, hospitals, pharmacies, patient organizations, and the national postal operator.

This year has marked unprecedented AMP expansion. The state now reimburses the cost of 705 medicines, including 273 available at no cost to patients. For the first time, the program covers medicines for pregnant women, children, and cancer patients, including those with breast cancer. Medicines for conditions already included in the program such as cardiovascular, endocrine, autoimmune, mental, and behavioral disorders have also expanded.



Opening session of the Affordable Medicines regional meeting.  
Photo credit: SAFEMed

Natalia Husak, Head of NHSU, highlighted the positive trend in scaling the program: "The AMP is an example of how the system can deliver results even during war. We see progress in funding, pharmacy network coverage, and the number of patients receiving medicines for free. This progress is not the achievement of a single institution. It is the result of the collective efforts of local governments, doctors, pharmacists, pharmacy owners, international and patient organizations who advocated, supported, and expanded the program."

More than 5.8 million patients have benefited from the AMP since its launch, with 81 million prescriptions reimbursed. This year’s budget exceeds UAH 7 billion (approximately 168,8M USD). Volyn leads western regions in prescription redemption and patient engagement.

"Almost 174,000 patients have benefited," said Dr. Husak. "Sixty-four pharmacies have NHSU contracts and there are 545 dispensing points for ePrescriptions. Our issuance and redemption rate is 87%, among the highest in the country."

Rebecca Kohler, SAFEMed’s Chief of Party, underscored how people drive the program’s success. "We are proud to have supported the AMP for 8 years. It is effective, popular, and people centered. Its strength starts with primary care doctors who know their patients best. Further, regional meetings such as these are vital for building trust, sharing experience, and providing feedback directly to decision-makers."

During the meeting, participants discussed persistent challenges in rural areas. Across the country, mobile pharmacies and Ukrposhta distribution points help reach remote communities, but coverage gaps, including in Volyn—where only 12% of villages have a pharmacy—remain. The meeting made clear that the success of the AMP depends not only on financing and medicine lists, but also on collaboration among regional managers, doctors, patients, and government agencies. Open communication enables faster problem-solving and practical improvements in access to treatment.

## GOVERNMENT EXPANDS NATIONAL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

On October 8, 2025, the Cabinet of Ministries of Ukraine approved Resolution No. 1268, updating the National Essential Medicines List (NEML), a key document defining which medicines should be available for public coverage in hospitals and outpatient settings.

The list now includes 27 new international nonproprietary names (INNs) and their combinations, targeting major public health priorities such as cardiovascular and endocrine diseases, mental health conditions, and fungal infections. The decision expands access to safe, evidence-based treatment nationwide. The updated NEML will guide revisions to hospital formularies and procurement plans. By 2026, several newly listed medicines are expected to be included in the AMP, enabling patients to receive them for free or with partial co-payment via ePrescriptions. The government also intends to increase the NHSU reimbursement budget to ensure continuity of care.

SAFEMed continues to support the MOH and NHSU in advancing reimbursement policy, strengthening analytics, and improving communication to build public trust. SAFEMed has also supported NEML development to ensure evidence-based reimbursement decisions and centralized procurement.

### 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 U.S. Government, 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.

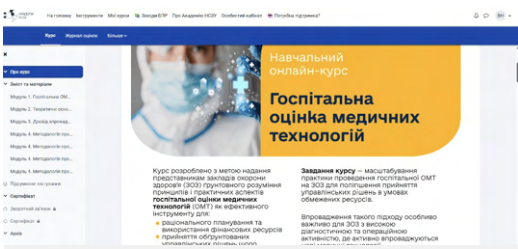
# TWO NEW TRAINING COURSES ADDED TO THE NHSU ACADEMY

SAFEMed works to strengthen the expertise of national and regional health professionals to implement reforms effectively. In 2025, SAFEMed helped expand the NHSU Academy online learning platform, a leading resource for continuing education.

More than 12,000 pharmacists have now completed the online course, Pharmaceutical Care and ePrescriptions, launched in June with SAFEMed support. Two additional courses debuted in October:

- Hospital-Based Health Technology Assessment (HB-HTA), developed with NHSU and leading clinical institutions including the O.O. Bohomolets National Medical University and the M.M. Amosov National Institute of Cardiovascular Surgery. It is designed to equip hospital directors practical tools for evidence-based adoption of medical technologies. The program offers clear, practical steps adapted to international best practices and Ukrainian realities, supporting informed decisions-making and resource allocation.
- The Good Practices in Pharmaceutical Promotion course, developed with LA Law Firm, supports ethical marketing standards introduced in MOH Order No. 962 (June 12, 2025), drafted with support from SAFEMed.

To date, 190 learners have completed the HB-HTA course, and 229 have completed the pharmaceutical promotion course. These programs help ensure transparent, evidence-based decision-making in planning, budgeting, and medication use.



Screenshot from home page of hospital-based Health Technology Assessment course on NHSU Academy website

## SAFEMED FINALIZES REVIEW OF 8 YEARS OF HEALTH SYSTEMS CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

In September, SAFEMed completed a qualitative assessment of capacity strengthening efforts across eight years of collaboration with Ukrainian partners. The review highlighted the tremendous achievements made possible through the project's collaborative and country-driven approach. The review examined 312 project documents and included interviews and focus groups with 40 practitioners. Study participants shared their experiences, insights, and the changes made possible through our joint efforts. Their stories brought to life the tangible impact of our activities, enriching the assessment with actual voices and helping to turn documented findings into a vivid, human narrative. Their contributions were particularly valuable in understanding how capacity-building efforts translate into concrete results on the ground. Despite COVID-19 and the ongoing war, the study demonstrates that adaptable, strategic efforts can deliver lasting results. It highlighted several key successes: a stronger Medical Procurement Agency (MPU), modernized supply chains for HIV, TB, and COVID-19, and resilient digital health solutions such as MedData, eStock, and ERP systems that safeguard treatment access even in crisis. The study reaffirmed that aligning capacity development activities with country priorities and international standards results in sustained institutional improvements. Continued digitalization and coordination remain essential for Ukraine's health system to remain resilient and future ready. SAFEMed is proud of what we have achieved together and thanks every contributor whose expertise and dedication made these results possible.

Read more: <https://msh.org/resources/building-a-stronger-ukrainian-health-system/>

## MEDICAL PROCUREMENT OF UKRAINE CELEBRATES 7 YEARS: A JOURNEY TOWARD TRANSPARENCY, ACCESS, AND TRUST

This October marks the seventh anniversary of the Medical Procurement of Ukraine (MPU), the national agency responsible for ensuring access to safe and effective medicines and medical devices. The organization has become a model of transparent, professional public procurement. Its systems meet international anti-corruption standards, verified through multi-year compliance certifications. The organization continues to automate processes, expand its mandate, and introduce modern technologies to improve access for patients nationwide, even in wartime. For all seven years, SAFEMed has been a committed partner to MPU, advancing digital tools, strengthening governance, and boosting efficiency in procurement systems. On its seventh anniversary, we congratulate the MPU team and thank our partners and patients whose trust has made this progress possible.



Photo credit: MPU

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