



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

MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST

JULY 2026



UKRAINE'S WARTIME EXPERIENCE CONTRIBUTES TO THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL HIV RESPONSE



The Ukraine Center of Public Health, SAFEMed, and other MSH representatives at the AIDS 2026 Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where thousands of researchers, policymakers, healthcare professionals, donors, and community leaders gathered for the AIDS 2026 conference, Ukraine's experience sustaining HIV services during wartime became part of the global conversation on the future of HIV response.

Three studies supported by the “Safe, Affordable, and Effective Medicines for Ukrainians” (SAFEMed) Activity, funded by the U.S. Government, were presented as scientific posters at AIDS 2026, showcasing practical implementation experience from Ukraine to strengthen HIV service delivery in crisis settings. Serhii Strashuk, SAFEMed Deputy Chief of Party, and Vira Horovenko, Senior Technical Advisor, represented the activity and shared these experiences with the global HIV community.

Held under the theme “Rethink. Rebuild. Rise.”, AIDS 2026 took place at a pivotal moment for the global HIV response. As countries adapt to a changing global funding landscape, the conference focused on identifying practical, country-led solutions to sustain HIV prevention, testing, and treatment while protecting decades of progress against the epidemic.

The three SAFEMed-supported studies highlighted complementary approaches to strengthening the resilience of Ukraine's HIV response. They examined improved antiretroviral forecasting and quantification, optimization of regional laboratory networks, and resilient last-mile distribution models for HIV medicines and other life-saving health products. Together, they demonstrate how stronger supply chains, data-driven planning, and adaptive service delivery can help ensure uninterrupted access to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment in war-affected settings.

Ukraine's experience demonstrates that even under the extraordinary pressures of war, health systems can continue delivering essential HIV services through innovation, strong national leadership, and strategic investments in system resilience. By sharing Ukraine's implementation experience at AIDS 2026, SAFEMed contributed to the global exchange of practical approaches for building more resilient, country-led HIV responses.

UKRAINE EXPANDS ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING CARDIOVASCULAR MEDICINES THROUGH THE AFFORDABLE MEDICINES PROGRAM

Patients living with cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases in Ukraine can now access a broader range of affordable medicines through the largest expansion of the Affordable Medicines Program since its launch. Effective July 15, the expanded reimbursement list makes additional essential treatments available at low or no cost, helping reduce financial barriers to care for the country's leading cause of death.

The expansion was enabled by Cabinet of Ministers [Resolution No. 742](#) and the National Health Service of Ukraine's approval of an updated reimbursement list. Together, these decisions added 51 international nonproprietary names (INNs) and 261 reimbursable medicine stock-keeping units (SKUs), including 140 combination medicines. Of these, 171 medicines are fully reimbursed, while 90 are available with a patient co-payment.

The update also introduces clinical eligibility criteria for selected high-impact medicines, including treatments for chronic heart failure, helping ensure that reimbursement reaches patients who will benefit most.

The expansion also introduces a new reimbursement mechanism for 102 medicines manufactured in Ukraine and offered at the lowest wholesale price. By improving affordability while supporting domestic pharmaceutical production, the new approach strengthens patient access to essential medicines, improves efficiencies, and enhances the resilience of Ukraine's pharmaceutical supply during wartime.

SAFEMed supported the Ministry of Health and the National Health Service of Ukraine throughout the design and implementation of the expansion by providing technical assistance, analytical support, stakeholder coordination, data-driven recommendations, and implementation support. This support helped strengthen one of Ukraine's largest government-funded national health financing programs, helping ensure that more Ukrainians can continue treatment for chronic diseases while reinforcing equitable access to essential medicines through a stronger, evidence-informed reimbursement system.

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 the U.S. Government, the MSH-led project 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 healthcare system in the wake of the war.



Rebecca Kohler, SAFEMed Chief of Party, speaks during the Affordable Medicines Program regional meeting in Khmelnytskyi, May 2026

KYIV BECOMES THE FIRST REGION TO LAUNCH MANAGED ENTRY AGREEMENT CO-FINANCING



Representatives of the Kyiv City State Administration and Medical Procurement of Ukraine following the signing of Ukraine's first regional Managed Entry Agreement (MEA) co-financing agreement. Photo credit: MPU

Kyiv has become the first region in Ukraine to use the Managed Entry Agreement (MEA) co-financing mechanism. MEAs are innovative reimbursement arrangements that expand patient access to high-cost medicines while helping governments manage financial risks and ensure sustainable healthcare financing. This milestone creates a new pathway for regional investment in innovative medicines and vaccines.

On July 9, the Kyiv City State Administration's Health Department signed a co-financing agreement with Medical Procurement of Ukraine (MPU), enabling procurement of the 9-valent HPV vaccine to provide free vaccination for girls and boys aged 12–14. The agreement marks the first practical implementation of regional MEA financing since Ukraine introduced the legal framework for the mechanism earlier this year.

Kyiv's decision transforms regional MEAs from a legislative possibility into a functioning financing mechanism that other regions can now follow. It demonstrates that local governments are prepared to invest alongside the national government in expanding patient access to innovative medicines and vaccines, creating a practical model for broader regional adoption.

This milestone follows a nationwide effort by SAFEMed, in partnership with MPU and the Ministry of Health, to help regional authorities move from understanding the new legislation to preparing for implementation. Through a national webinar, regional workshops involving representatives from 15 regions, and the development of the Regional MEA Implementation Guide, the project equipped local decision-makers with the practical knowledge and tools needed to participate in the new financing mechanism. Kyiv's agreement demonstrates that this investment in regional capacity translated into real financing decisions rather than remaining a policy reform on paper.

As other regions build on Kyiv's example, the regional MEA mechanism has the potential to expand access to innovative medicines and vaccines across Ukraine while strengthening the long-term sustainability of the country's health financing system. It also reinforces a transparent, rules-based financing model that builds confidence among international partners and supports continued investment in Ukraine's health sector.

UKRAINE ADVANCES PATIENT SAFETY WITH NEW MEDICINES VERIFICATION ORGAN

Ukraine took a major step toward implementing its national medicines verification system by officially establishing the National Medicines Verification Organization (NMVO). The system will use 2D coding to verify the authenticity of prescription medicines. Registered on July 10, 2026, the independent, industry-led organization will administer the future medicines verification system and coordinate its implementation.

Once fully implemented, every pack of prescription medicines in Ukraine will carry a unique 2D barcode that can be scanned to verify its authenticity before it reaches a patient. The system will help protect patients from falsified medicines, strengthen confidence across the pharmaceutical supply chain, and create a more predictable market for responsible pharmaceutical companies, including U.S. companies operating in Ukraine.



Medicines verification will help protect patients from falsified medicines and strengthen supply chain transparency

The NMVO was formally established following its founding meeting on July 2, at which leading pharmaceutical industry associations representing domestic and international pharmaceutical manufacturers in Ukraine approved the organization's establishment, founding documents, governance arrangements, and next steps.

With the governance structure now in place, Ukraine can move forward with the next implementation phase, including development of technical specifications, procurement of the technology provider, and preparation for system rollout.

SAFEMed played a central role in helping achieve this milestone. Over the past four years, the project worked alongside the Ministry of Health, pharmaceutical industry associations, legal experts, technology providers, and other key stakeholders to build the legal, technical, and organizational foundations for the reform. SAFEMed also supported the development of an implementation roadmap, technical requirements, and coordination mechanisms that laid the foundation for implementation of the national medicines verification system.

The establishment of the NMVO demonstrates how sustained U.S. Government support can help translate complex regulatory reform into lasting institutional change. By helping establish an independent, industry-led organization, SAFEMed has supported a sustainable governance model that will strengthen medicines safety, improve supply-chain transparency, and enable Ukraine to manage its medicines verification system independently for years to come.

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