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Ministry of
Health

Hosted by:



HEPASIST
National Association for Fighting Hepatitis



BULGARIAN
ASSOCIATION
FOR THE STUDY
OF THE LIVER



BULGARIAN
ASSOCIATION
OF HEPATOLOGISTS
НА НЕПЕЛИТОЛОГИ

**SCREENING AND
PREVENTION**
FOR VIRAL HEPATITIS
AND HIV IN CEE
*Common challenges
joint solutions*

2018
June 28-29
SOFIA



CALL FOR ACTION

***The participants of the Regional multi-stakeholder conference
“Screening and prevention for viral hepatitis and HIV in CEE. Common challenges, joint solutions”,
organized under the auspices of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU,
the Healthcare Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria and
the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Bulgaria,***

Having regards to:

- The Global health sector strategy on HIV, 2016-2021 and the Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region¹;
- The Global health sector strategy on viral hepatitis 2016-2021 and the Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region²;
- The WHO Guidelines on hepatitis B and C testing³;
- The European Parliament Call for Action from 11 March 2017 on “The Challenge of Hepatitis C in Central and South Eastern Europe: Who is at risk and how can patients gain access to effective screening, diagnosis and treatment?”, organized by the MEP Friends of Liver Group with the support of ELPA, EASL and EPHA;
- The Malta Declaration on HIV/AIDS for fast-tracking actions on HIV towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 in the European Union;
- The Outcome document of the Senior-Level Policy Dialogue on HIV and TB held in Tallinn, “Addressing HIV and TB Challenges: from Donor Support to Sustainable Health Systems”;
- The outcome of the debate among participants at this conference,

calls upon the national authorities and all other health stakeholders from the CEE Region to:

1. Develop country-specific public health strategies and national plans with measurable targets whilst endorsing people-centered approach and universal health coverage principles for the purpose of integrating the existing resources, expertise and capacities available in the target countries to improve the testing and control programs for fighting viral hepatitis and HIV.
2. Develop or strengthen prevention programmes, including through the integration of strategies for improving the vaccination coverage, to reduce incidence, prevalence and transmission of viral hepatitis and HIV;
3. Set a national goal to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by or before 2030, in line with WHO’s elimination goal.
4. Set national goals for fighting HIV using the existing resources, expertise and capacities, developed within countries which are supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.
5. Develop, fund and implement screening programs targeted at risk populations with a special focus on vulnerable groups specific for the region;
6. Ensure that adequate funding is available and sustained to support viral hepatitis and HIV testing programs.

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¹ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/246178/WHO-HIV-2016.05-eng.pdf?sequence=1>

² <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/246177/WHO-HIV-2016.06-eng.pdf?sequence=1>

³ <http://www.who.int/hepatitis/publications/guidelines-hepatitis-c-b-testing/en/>

7. Encourage best-practice exchange and collaboration between counties in the CEE region, stemming from shared values and common challenges, to achieve better nationally-tailored solutions,
8. Involve the medical community and affected community and endorse strengthened integrated approach in primary healthcare and further public health cross-sectoral linkages to ensure better coverage and increased participation in screening programmes for viral hepatitis and HIV.
9. Ensure access to diagnostics and treatment with no restrictions, in line with international guidelines and the Sustainable Development Agenda for ensuring universal access to healthcare for all, including the uninsured populations to ensure optimal coverage with a special focus on a vulnerable groups with limited or no healthcare coverage such as migrants, minorities etc.
10. Address discrimination and stigma by investing additional efforts to identify and remove regulatory barriers to access through adjustments in the existing legal and regulatory frameworks where necessary.
11. Encourage leadership from policy-makers and/or other stakeholders– champions of patients’ rights, to promote equal access to effective prevention, early diagnosis and treatment for patients with viral hepatitis and HIV;
12. Ensure meaningful involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including vulnerable groups’ representatives, in the solution-finding discussions to develop effective and efficient policies that address the specific needs of patients with viral hepatitis and HIV.
13. Encourage the development of community-based services designed according to their specific needs. The services should be accessible and, where possible, be supplied at the right location for the appropriate groups in need.

The CALL FOR ACTION was adopted during the regional conference “Screening and prevention for viral hepatitis and HIV in CEE. Common challenges, joint solutions” held on 28-29 of June 2018 in Vitosha Park Hotel, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Among the participants in the event were representatives from the following organizations and institutions from 10 countries in the CEE Region: Romania, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria:

- ✚ European Parliament
- ✚ DG SANTE – Unit C3 Health Threats, European Commission
- ✚ MEP Friends of the Liver Group
- ✚ World Health Organization – Region Europe
- ✚ World Health Organization – office Bulgaria
- ✚ Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia, Department of Public Health
- ✚ Ministry of Health of the Republic of Romania
- ✚ National Institute of Public Health of the Czech Republic
- ✚ Hungarian Ministry of Human Capacities
- ✚ Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ✚ Croatian Institute of Public Health
- ✚ National Institute of Public Health – National Institute of Hygiene of Poland
- ✚ Healthcare Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria
- ✚ Ministry of Health of the Republic of Bulgaria
- ✚ Robert Koch Institute, Germany
- ✚ Department of Infectious and Tropical Diseases, First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University and Na Bulovce Hospital, Prague - Czech Republic
- ✚ Center of Epidemiological Studies on HIV and STI in Catalonia (CEEISCAT)
- ✚ University of Zagreb – Croatia
- ✚ Clinic for infectious diseases, UKC RS Banjaluka – Bosnia and Hercegovina
- ✚ Polish Association for the Study of the Liver
- ✚ Hellenic Association for the Study of the Liver - Greece
- ✚ Bulgarian Association for the Study of the Liver (BgASL)
- ✚ Clinic of Gastroenterology - University Hospital "Tsaritsa Yoanna – ISUL” - Bulgaria
- ✚ Clinic of Gastroenterology, St. Ivan Rilsky University Hospital - Bulgaria
- ✚ Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital – Bulgaria

- ✚ Medical University of Sofia – Bulgaria
- ✚ European Liver Patients' Association
- ✚ Association of patients with hepatitis C (former NGO "Hepatitis Association) – Latvia
- ✚ The Association of Liver Patients in Romania APAH-RO - Romania
- ✚ BAYLOR BLACK SEA FOUNDATION - Romania
- ✚ COPAC – RO – Romania
- ✚ Bliss without Risk – Czech Republic
- ✚ HULOH Hepatos – Zagreb – Croatia
- ✚ Croatian association for HIV and viral hepatitis (HUHIV)
- ✚ Life Quality Improvement Organisation LET/FLIGHT – Croatia
- ✚ Rights Reporter Foundation - Hungary
- ✚ Association PROI - Bosnia and Hercegovina
- ✚ The Chronic Viral Hepatitis Patients Association - "B18" - Bosnia and Hercegovina
- ✚ Foundation for Social Education - Poland
- ✚ Stowarzyszenie SOS-WZW - Poland
- ✚ Hepar Centar – Bitola – Republic of Macedonia
- ✚ Hellenic Liver Patient Association “Prometheus” – Greece
- ✚ Positive voice - Greece
- ✚ Ath Checkpoint - Greece
- ✚ European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG)
- ✚ Civil AIDS Forum
- ✚ Initiative for Health Foundation - Bulgaria
- ✚ HepActive - Bulgaria
- ✚ Foundation I – Bulgaria
- ✚ National Association for Fighting Hepatitis "Hepasist"
- ✚ National Patients' Organization
- ✚ Patient Access Partnership (PACT)
- ✚ International HIV Partnerships (IHP)
- ✚ Magyar Narancs – Hungary
- ✚ Naftemporiki - Greece
- ✚ LEHC - Portuguese Catholic University
- ✚ International Association of Providers of AIDS Care
- ✚ Let's End HepC Project
- ✚ Abbvie
- ✚ GSK
- ✚ Novartis Bulgaria EOOD
- ✚ ZENTIVA
- ✚ MSD Europe