
FINALIZATION OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE "HEALTH FOR ALL" PROJECT

Preliminary outcomes





KEY DATA FOR THE SECOND PHASE OF HEALTH FOR ALL PROJECT



DURATION

1 April 2019 -
31 March 2023



DONOR

Swiss Agency For Development
and Cooperation (SDC)

Implementing Agency: Swiss
Tropical and Public
Health Institute
through HAP Center



OVERALL GOAL

The overall goal of the second phase of Health for All Project is that the Albanian population benefits from better health due to improved Primary Health Care services



OUTCOME 1

MoHSP and its regional entities improve the stewardship, management and effectiveness of primary health care service



OUTCOME 2

Citizens in target regions have access and use effectively primary health care services of better quality



CONTINUITY

The consolidation phase of the project starts on April 1, 2023 and lasts until March 31, 2027

1. HAP'S RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

COVID-19

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Swiss Embassy, the Norwegian Embassy, and UNDP, Albania's health authorities were supported in their fight against COVID-19 by acquiring 30 respirators for the intensive care units in COVID hospitals.

In the domain of primary health care, HAP supported the teams of 100 health centers in Tirana, Dibër and Fier counties by:

- Providing personal protective equipment (surgical mask, gloves, reusable isolation gown, disinfectants), pulse oximeters and thermal scanners
- Delivering 58 oxygen concentrators for home care for patients requiring oxygen therapy along with training of healthcare professionals on their proper usage
- Publishing training/educational materials for the prevention and control of COVID-19, putting emphasis on primary health care workers
- Adopting, producing and distributing informational materials for the public such as posters and leaflets

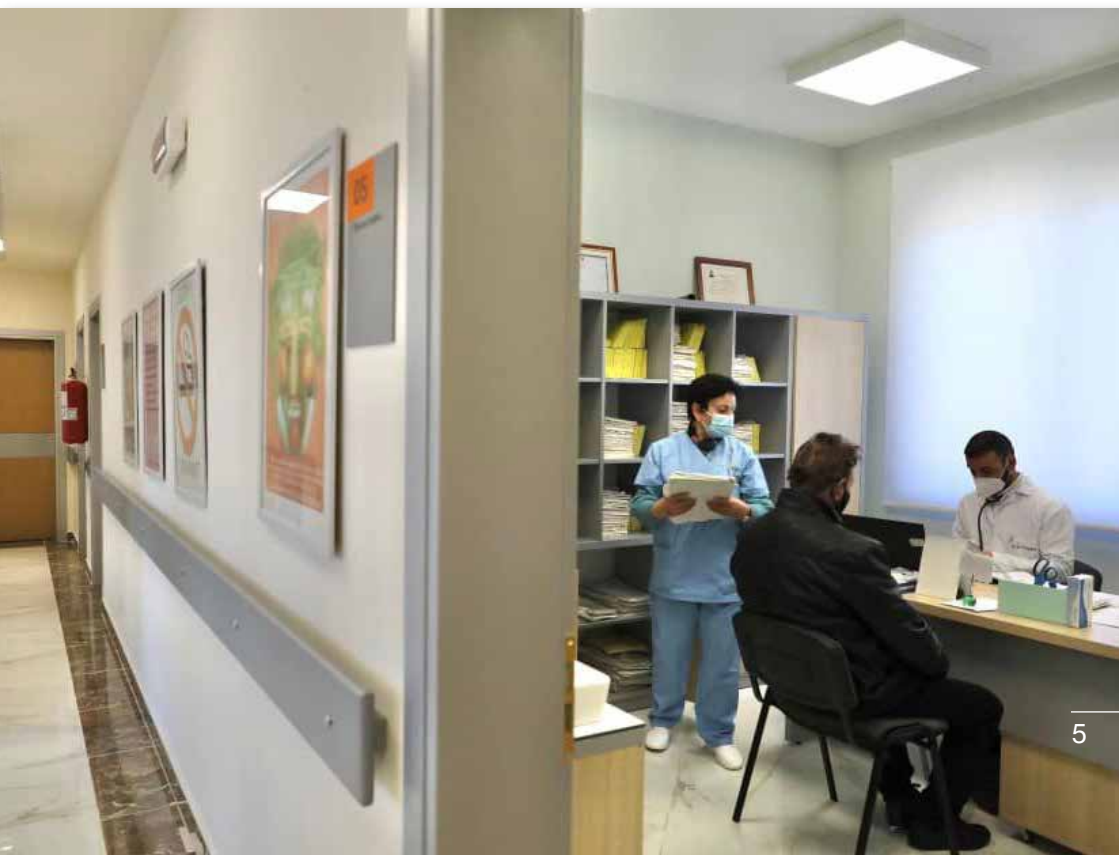


THE EARTHQUAKE OF NOVEMBER 26, 2019

In the framework of Switzerland's aid to Albania for the recovery from the earthquake of November 26, 2019, HAP enabled the construction of two health centers from the ground up. The Health Centers of Ishmi (Durrës Municipality) and Borizana (Krujë Municipality),

were constructed with an investment of approximately 385.000 CHF and offer primary health care services to around 13.000 inhabitants.

Furthermore, the health center in Zall Mner, located in Kamza municipality, is almost finished.



2. SUPPORT ON POLICY DRAFTING

One of the main achievements in terms of policy-making is the drafting of the National Strategy for the Development of Primary Health Care Services 2020-2025. The strategy, drafted with the support of HAP, was approved by decision of the Council of Ministers in May 2020. HAP is currently providing support to health authorities in implementing different components of the strategy, including new models of residential health care, practical application of clinical protocols for chronic diseases and implementation of updated roles for nurses within the professional team of the PHC.

HAP has provided support in evaluating the National Health Strategy 2016-2020, drawing on the lessons learned and recommendations to draft the new Strategy, which commenced implementation in 2021 and will continue until 2030.



3. REFORM

INTERVENTION

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE PATIENTS

HAP has collaborated with partners to develop and implement multiple interventions aimed at providing healthcare to vulnerable patient populations, including chronically disabled patients and homebound elderly individuals.

Health care at home

HAP has provided support for the re-dimensioning of residential health care services, which are planned, standardized, and provided to patients in a systematic and continuous manner. In the first phase of implementation, this service model was piloted in 9 health centers (in Dibër and Fier counties) for approximately 372 patients who were classified for home health care. Since the beginning of the service (May 2021), there has been a total of 4110 residence visits (as of January 2023).

The nurses responsible for providing this service are equipped with a set of medical and para-medical tools to perform advanced nursing procedures in home conditions.



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Simultaneously, the nursing personnel has received training in conducting nursing procedures, documenting the visits, and reporting them in the electronic database of the Mandatory Health Insurance Fund.

HAP is working with central and local health authorities to expand residential health care services across the country. Currently, assistance is being provided to 22 health centers across 5 counties (Tirana, Durrës, Korçë, Elbasan, and Shkodër), where 1452 patients who are unable to leave their home are expected to receive home-based health care.

The new professional master's program in Family Nursing

HAP has extended comprehensive support to the development and implementation of the professional master's program in Family Nursing, offered by the Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences (FoTMS). The master's degree program, introduced for the first time in Albania, has been designed to meet the evolving role of family nurses, addressing the increasing demand for qualified home-based care in response to the aging population and the management of chronic non-communicable diseases.

In this context, HAP provided technical expertise to support the multidisciplinary working group in developing the curriculum, enhancing the capabilities of the responsible lecturers, and improving the infrastructure of the primary care health centers where teaching practices for students are conducted. In addition, HAP contributed to the construction of the clinical simulation laboratory at FoTMS with the goal of enhancing the practical training of students.



IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE

To further the project's objective of *“improving primary health care services for the Albanian population”*, HAP has implemented the following interventions:

Strengthening the clinical skills of family physicians and nurses

Family doctors and nurses in 118 health centers across 7 districts (Diber, Fier, Tirana, Elbasan, Korçë, Shkodër and Durrës) have been provided with a set of medical instruments that facilitate the examination of the patient from head to toe. Furthermore, they receive training on the proper use of each instrument in their daily practice, through dedicated training sessions and ongoing continuing education activities such as Peer Groups.

Updating clinical protocols and guidelines

HAP has supported the updating of medication protocols and clinical guidelines for the five most commonly encountered non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in primary health care, which include hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, dyslipidemias, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary syndrome (COPD). The complete set of documents has been approved by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection for utilization by primary health care teams.



A training manual has been developed for each of the protocols, which can be utilized in ongoing educational activities aimed at enhancing the management of these chronic diseases. In this regard, HAP has provided support for the development of 46 Train-the-Trainer sessions, focused on the utilization of protocols for 5 NCDs, which were attended by 871 family doctors and nurses. Subsequently, the trained healthcare personnel disseminated the knowledge acquired to their colleagues at the respective health centers through Colleague Groups.

In addition to the protocols for the 5 NCDs, HAP also provided support in developing the "Manual of Healthcare for the Elderly" and "Guidelines for the Management of PHC" as reference materials for improved treatment and management of these health conditions in primary care."

Updating profiles of primary care professionals

During Phase 2, HAP contributed to the revision of job descriptions (profiles) for 10 Primary Health Care professionals. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection has approved 3 new nursing profiles, proposed by HAP in cooperation with partners: the family nurse in the health center, the family nurse in the ambulance and the health care nurse in the residence. Currently, the new profiles are being implemented in 9 health centers in Fier and Dibër counties, where 159 nurses have been oriented with the comprehensive job description and received training enhanced services for chronic patients, including nursing assessment, continuous care, and patient education.

Continuing education activities for health professionals

Peer Groups, a form of continuing education for primary health care professionals introduced by HAP, are widely used by the teams of 125 healthcare centers in Albania. During the second phase of the HAP, 1604 family doctors and nurses participated in Peer Groups to strengthen clinical skills and extend new service models, enabling better coverage for chronic patients.

A notable aspect in this regard is the collaboration between HAP and five municipalities in Dibër and Fier counties to implement a co-financing mechanism aimed at enhancing the infrastructure of primary healthcare facilities. The mechanism foresees the involvement of the local government in the investment for the rehabilitation of health centers and/or ambulances where 70% of the investment is covered by HAP and 30% by the municipalities.

Improving primary care infrastructure

Thanks to the funding provided by the Swiss government through HAP, approximately 220.000 residents have been benefiting from improved healthcare services in 30 health centers and reconstructed clinics from 2015 to 2022.

Supporting the strengthening of academic institutions

HAP has partnered with academic institutions to enhance managerial and research capacities in health, including the establishment of a professional master's degree in Health Management and the development of Continuing Education activities such as the training program for Operational Research in Health.



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More specifically, 75 students have graduated from the professional master's program in health management, which has been offered by the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Economics since 2017. Today, more than 50% of them hold managerial positions in health institutions.

In order to enhance the capacities for Operational Research in Health, the Training Course "Operational Research

in the Health System in Albania" has been designed and implemented, which contains 10 learning modules delivered over 60 classroom hours. The course was provided to 68 participants across four cohorts.

In support of operational research, HAP in cooperation with the Medical University of Tirana (UMT), have revised the Internal Regulation for the Research Ethics Committee at UMT.



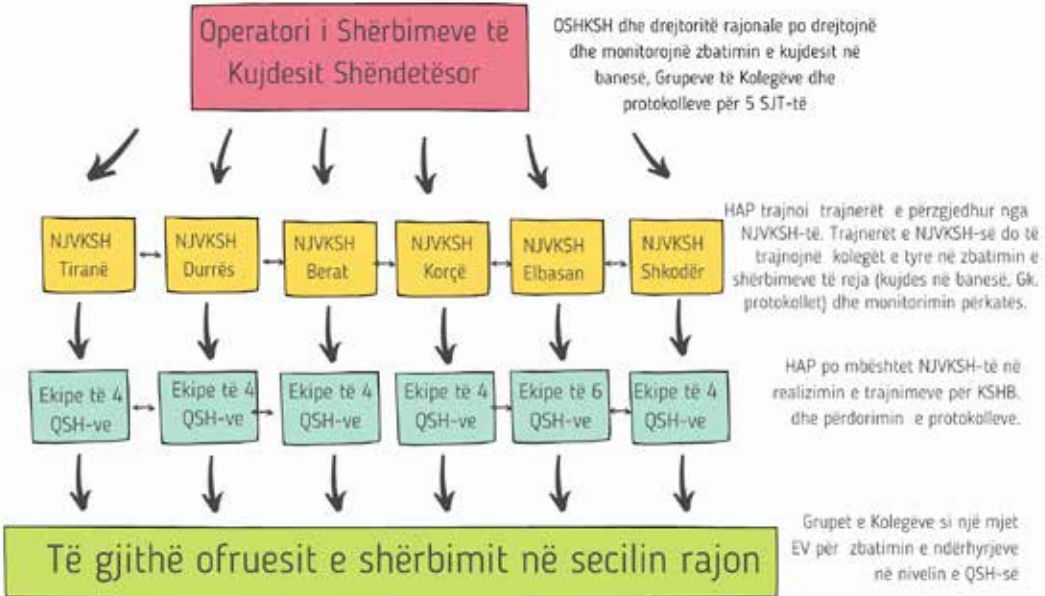
4. SCOPE OF INTERVENTIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Following the piloting of HAP interventions in Dibër and Fier counties and obtaining preliminary results, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection has approved the national level extension of the residential health care model and the use of new treatment protocols for the 5 NCDs. The first 26 health centers where the interventions will be implemented are located in 6 districts, namely Tirana, Durrës, Korçë, Shkodër, Elbasan and Berat.

HAP is providing support to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Health Care Services Operator, and Local Health Care Units in designing and implementing outreach activities through a cascade approach.

The cascade approach involves engaging the personnel of the Local Health Care Units in the planning, organizing, monitoring, and reporting of the implementation of interventions. More specifically, this approach entails training-the-trainers in the use of protocols and clinical guidelines for the 5 NCDs and residential health care services, and subsequently transferring knowledge and skills to health care providers in each health center through continuing education activities such as Peer Groups.

Qasja kaskadë për shtrirjen e ndërhyrjeve të HAP



From May 2021 to January 2023, approximately 20% of PHC providers in the country, including 464 family doctors and 1248 nurses, have participated in Peer Groups and other training

activities, with a focus on the utilization of protocols and clinical guidelines for the management of the 5 NCDs and home-based health care.

5. THE CONSOLIDATION PHASE

Starting from April 1, 2023, HAP will commence the final phase of implementation, during which the aim is to consolidate the most successful interventions that have been designed and implemented by the project since its inception. The two main outcomes of the consolidation phase are:

- Outcome 1: National health institutions lead and manage primary health care and home care services more efficiently and effectively.

- Outcome 2: Citizens have access to and efficient utilization of higher quality primary health care and home care services.

Aiming to achieve these two main results, HAP, in collaboration with partners, has identified 8 main products that are also in line with the priorities of health authorities and other national and foreign institutions, operating in the field of primary health care (PHC) in Albania.



Output 1

The development and refinement of updated PHC models are carried out in conjunction with the 2021-2025 PHC Services Development Strategy. HAP will provide support for: strengthening the monitoring capacities of the MoHSP, establishing an initial foundation for future strategy and developing an Action Plan for scaling up the interventions. Additionally, HAP will mobilize technical expertise in relation to the main strategies that guide the development of the PHC system.

Output 2

The organizational development for effective and efficient operations of the dependent institutions of the Ministry of Health is carried forward, focusing on strengthening the capacities of the regional directorates of the Health Care Services Operator and of the Local Health Services Units; Quality Assurance Agency and improving the functions of the Mandatory Health Care Insurance Fund.



Output 3

Sufficient inclusion of geriatrics and gerontology subjects in the existing post-graduate training programs of the Faculty of Medicine/ University of Medicine is ensured and an ongoing education program on care for the elderly is implemented for the service providers of PHC through "training-the-trainer".

Output 4

Encouraging the role and capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media for advocacy. HAP will work towards strengthening the capacities of CSOs for the production, analysis and communication of evidence related to health services; enabling CSOs to participate and become a constructive voice in the governance of health services.



Output 5

Developing and implementing digital health solutions to improve the quality of care. In this regard, HAP will provide support for the development of NCD protocols in the form of algorithms and electronic applications to facilitate clinical decision-making; the implementation of teleconsultation solutions for the interaction between PHC service providers and specialist doctors; and the extension of the visit planning system with the family doctor team, among other initiatives."

Output 6

The geographical extension of the use of protocols and clinical guidelines for the treatment of NCDs, together with Peer Groups, is achieved. This includes the training of the HCSO and the LHCU in the independent delivery of continuing education activities pertaining to the utilization of protocols and clinical guidelines for NCDs, along with associated monitoring, as well as the enhancement of health promotion capabilities and activities for the prevention and control of NCDs at the health center level.



Output 7

The scope of residential care services is expanded and put into practice. HAP will provide support to the HCSO and the LHCU to fully expand residential care services in at least 6 counties. HAP will also assist in the implementation of health promotion activities by family medicine teams for patients who are unable to leave their homes, and collaborate with CSOs to conduct periodic evaluations of residential care and related aspects.

Output 8

Specific vulnerable groups benefit from PHC services in general, and residential care in particular. HAP will support local CSOs to enhance their ability to identify vulnerable individuals and provide complementary services. HAP will also contribute to strengthening the interaction between municipalities, health centers and CSOs, and support efforts to improve the accessibility and quality of services for the elderly and patients affected by mental health disorders. In addition, it will support the HCSO, the LHCU, health centers and local CSOs to provide quality services to other vulnerable population groups.



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