



## UPDATE: SUMMARY NATIONAL COVID-19 STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE PLAN FOR HEALTH

On 30 January 2020, the WHO Director General declared the 2019-nCoV outbreak to be a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) following the recommendations of the Emergency Committee on 2019-nCoV, under the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005). In line with the need for global solidarity, the Committee felt that a global coordinated effort is needed to enhance preparedness in regions of the world that may need additional support. A strategic preparedness and response plan (SPRP) was developed for Uzbekistan, in collaboration with WHO and other partners, which provides guidance to manage the response to COVID-19. Following the incident management structure, WHO and its partners provide support to the government of Uzbekistan in the area of risk communication and community engagement, country operations, logistics and procurement, emergency public health measures, clinical and health interventions, surveillance, and laboratory support.

### RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

On 15 April 2020, WHO, in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, conducted a two-day training on effective communication in emergency situations for 30 press secretaries of MoH branches in the regions and for communication staff of medical organizations across Uzbekistan. The training covered a wide range of topics including: working with public opinion and combatting misinformation, development of clear, transparent messages on protective measures, community engagement, engaging trusted influencers, identification of target groups among the population as well as reliable, scientific, truthful and verified sources of information and channels for delivery of the messages to the public.



More than **361,600** posters, infographics and brochures in Uzbek, Russian, English and Karakalpak have been published and disseminated across Uzbekistan to raise awareness on COVID-19, including brochures on COVID-19 protection in Braille.



More than **100** social media posters and **20** videos in Uzbek and Russian have been developed and disseminated on various social media platforms. The posters cover physical distancing, hygiene and healthy lifestyle and mental stress. Three Public Service Announcements (PSA) on protection measures targeting the general public as well as media workers have been produced jointly with the MoH.



More than **11,000** young people of Uzbekistan were surveyed in order to better understand the effectiveness of public information campaigns of the Government on COVID-19 and to identify additional information needs of young people.

### COUNTRY OPERATIONS (LOGISTICS AND PROCUREMENT)

Between January and June 2020, WHO procured and delivered to Uzbekistan PPE for a total value of **USD 2,220** (USAIDS funds), including surgical masks, examination gloves, isolation gowns, safety goggles and other consumables.



WHO has also procured lab supplies for a total value of **USD 52,211**, including tests systems, polymerase for RNA extraction, tips, viral RNA, and transport mediums with swabs.



## EMERGENCY PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES

Well before the first case of COVID-19 was recorded in Uzbekistan, the government requested WHO support to conduct a joint external evaluation of the International Health Regulations (2005). Following the request, WHO Country Office started working extensively with the MoH to prepare for COVID-19 and an eventual outbreak. This included a quick assessment of and recommendations to scale up the readiness of two hospitals in Tashkent, as well as the assessment of leading laboratories and conducting trainings for staff of the Agency laboratories and its regional branches on COVID-19 diagnostics and biosafety. WHO helped the Ministry increase its readiness to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to this public health risk.

The initial emphasis was put on hospital readiness but also on the country's 53 entry points. When the first case of COVID-19 was recorded in the country on 16 March 2020, while Uzbekistan had put measures in place to register each person coming into the country, proper travel tracking of those persons proved to be a challenge, as many people did not stay in one location and moved through the country. Therefore, permanent support is being provided by WHO to the government through regular webinars on decision making about quarantine and isolation of patients, as well as the introduction of self-isolation of contacts, asymptomatic and mild cases of COVID-19.

## CLINICAL & HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

While most people with COVID-19 develop only mild illness, approximately 14% of cases develop a severe disease that requires hospitalization and oxygen support, and 5% require admission to an intensive care unit (ICU). While no specific treatment of asymptomatic and mild cases is recommended by WHO, severe and critical cases may result in acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), sepsis and septic shock, multi-organ failure, including acute kidney injury, and cardiac injury. Health workers require information about the clinical management of patients with severe symptoms. WHO provides support to the MoH in the area of clinical management by conducting regular webinars for clinicians across the country.

In total, eight clinical webinars were conducted since

the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, discussing clinical management, prevention of complications, case studies, providing available updates on Kawasaki disease, multiorgan failure, vaccines, and on antivirals which are currently being developed globally.

In addition, the national curriculum for ICU specialists is being updated. The national technical working group, consisting of critical care practitioners with support from WHO, developed and introduced 15 training modules for ICU specialists. The newly developed training program provides for a system approach to case management, highlights the importance of infection prevention and control for health care practitioners, sets up new standards of care, emphasizes the importance of pandemic preparedness and ethics during the pandemic, and provides best practices of management of patients in ICUs.

The National Guideline on Children's Management with COVID-19, including five training modules in Uzbek, Russian and Karakalpak, were developed based on the WHO recommendations by local experts and with the assistance of WHO Country Office. **600** copies of the Guideline were printed with WHO and UNICEF financial support. Two national webinars were conducted for national health workers and members of the UN Capacity Building Group on 24 April and 6 May 2020. The Interim National Clinical Guideline for the Management of COVID-19 in Pregnancy, Delivery and Postpartum Period, including three training modules in Uzbek and Russian, was developed with technical assistance from WHO Country Office. **8,000** copies of the guideline were printed with the support of UNFPA and disseminated among national health practitioners. On 26 May 2020, a national webinar was conducted in the framework of the UN Capacity Building Group, led by the MoH and WHO Country Office.

WHO Regional Office conducted a webinar for Central Asian countries on 'Cancer and palliative care services during the COVID-19 pandemic response' on 11 June 2020. Participants discussed the re-organization of services aimed at ensuring people-centred cancer care and palliative care during the COVID-19 outbreak. Representatives of Uzbek medical institutes and specialized health facilities attended the webinar, including oncologists, hematologists and pediatricians.

WHO Regional Office developed three predictive tools - Essential Supply Tool, Health Workforce Estimator and Adapt Surge Planning Support Tool, in order to support member states to forecast the number of supplies, healthcare workforce, space and beds needed for the COVID-19 response. WHO Country Office, with the involvement of WHO Regional Office, organized training sessions for government partners including from the MoH, the Ministry of Economy and Industry and the Ministry of Finance, on the three tools. Additional predictions of supply needs for four potential scenarios of the COVID-19 epidemic in Uzbekistan, made by the WHO Country Office, were presented to the MoH. A dedicated session for partners from the MoH was organized to further demonstrate the Health Workforce Tool using official data and answering questions from MoH colleagues. Continuous support is being provided.

### **ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY (EHS) AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDs)**

WHO Regional Office, with support from different country offices, organized four webinars on COVID-19 and NCD response as part of essential health service support for Central Asian countries in June 2020. Frontline physicians from other countries and experts from European professional societies, together with WHO experts, presented their experience. An additional two global technical NCD sessions were held to support essential NCD health services under the COVID-19 response, to provide practical country examples and to present the Global EHS strategy.

Representatives of the MoH attended a global WHO and partners online meeting for national NCD coordinators to support the EHS strategy related to NCDs in June 2020.

Routine immunization services are continuing in compliance with the Guidance on routine immunization services during COVID-19 pandemic in the WHO European Region.

### **HEALTH FINANCING AND COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Representatives of the Ministries of Health, Finance, Economy and Industry attended a webinar for Russian-speaking countries on health financing issues under the Partnership for health and World Bank initiative in

June 2020. Experts from Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation presented their countries' experience in solving health financing issues to respond to COVID-19. Representatives of Uzbekistan have been invited to attend a Health Financing forum with a series of health financing webinars during the weeks of July 13-25 organized by the World Bank, USAID and partners.

According to the MoH, over the past month, international organizations have not carried out purchases and deliveries. Contracts were signed for the supply of PPE and artificial ventilation devices, which are expected to be completed in July.

### **SURVEILLANCE AND ANALYTICS (LABORATORY)**

One of the priority areas of collaboration between WHO and the MoH is the strengthening of national capacity for emergency preparedness, including support for the national laboratories to detect newly emerging pathogens, such as COVID-19. To ensure readiness of the national laboratories to detect COVID-19, WHO started providing support to Uzbekistan well before the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. From 11-14 March 2020, a WHO international expert assessed the current capabilities, capacities and training lab specialists from designated labs on their COVID-19 testing methods and performing verification.

WHO provides continuous technical assistance to the MoH to improve and scale up national testing capacity for COVID-19. WHO procured and delivered over 25,000 testing systems and other necessary laboratory supplies to the Agency of Sanitary and Epidemiological Well-being. National and regional laboratories participate in the external quality assessment exercise organized by WHO.

Reports, presentations and recordings of the laboratory workshop are available in English and Russian in the Ezcollab library via the following link: <https://ezcollab.who.int/euroflu/flulab/library>.