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Policy Responses to Expand Access to Viral Hepatitis Testing and Care in Ukraine During Wartime

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OBJECTIVES

To analyze the political and organizational factors influencing access to viral hepatitis (VH) diagnosis and treatment in Ukraine and identify priority areas for improving the VH care pathway

METHODS

Analysis of national policies, regulatory documents, analytical reports of the Public Health Center and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, WHO assessments, and findings from the SHIM, COVIDIMPACT, and IBBS studies, together with other relevant sources published during 2020–2025

RESULTS

The war in Ukraine has exacerbated structural barriers to access to hepatitis diagnosis and treatment services due to population displacement, mobilization, and disruptions in the healthcare system.

Key factors in strengthening the VH response program included the update of the Standards of Medical Care in accordance with recommendations WHO, EASL, AASLD, the centralized procurement and distribution of rapid tests for HBV and HCV screening to a wide network of healthcare facilities, the provision of free VH screening and treatment services to patients under the Medical Guarantees Program.

An important step toward expanding access to PCR-based hepatitis diagnosis was the Global Fund's unique for Ukraine approval of funding for the procurement of GeneXpert cartridges, which made it possible to establish a regional network for PCR-based diagnosis based at regional centers for disease control and prevention (RCDC).

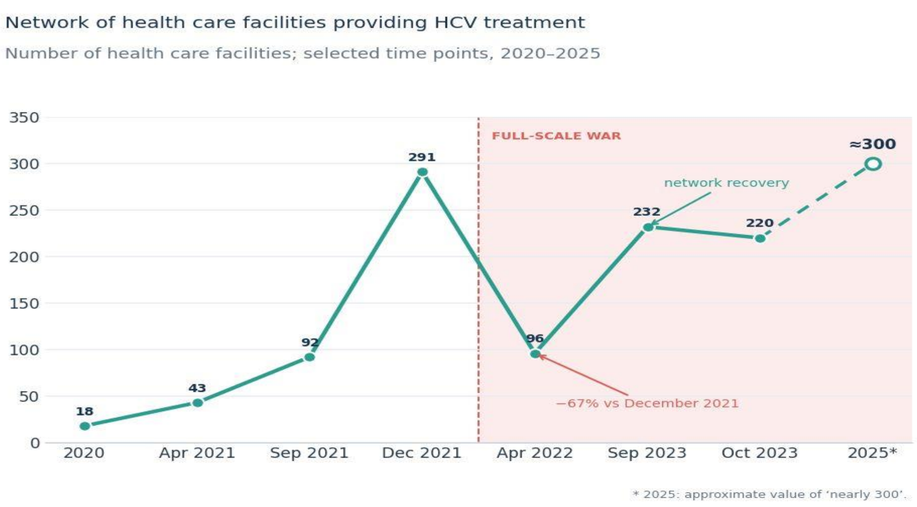
The involvement of the RCDC also helped strengthen epidemiological surveillance and public health education efforts related to VH.

As a result, the number of facilities providing VH diagnosis and treatment services increased from 18 in 2020 to nearly 300 in 2025 (Fig. 2), and by 2026, nearly 1,500 healthcare facilities will be providing screening services

Figure 1. Hepatitis C treatment coverage in Ukraine, 2016–2024.



Figure 2. Decentralization of viral hepatitis C treatment services in Ukraine, 2020–2025



CONCLUSIONS

Ukraine's experience demonstrates that political commitment, regulatory reform, and service decentralization can substantially improve access to VH care, even during prolonged crisis. Further progress requires sustainable public funding for PCR diagnostics, uninterrupted procurement of medicines and diagnostic supplies, implementation of a national patient registry, and stronger integration of VH services with primary care and HIV, tuberculosis, and substance use disorder services