



MINISTRY OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED
PERSONS FROM THE OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES, LABOUR, HEALTH AND
SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF GEORGIA



საპატარავთა კონტროლისა და
საზოგადოებრივი ჯანმრთელობის
ცენტრის ეროვნული ცენტრი
GEORGIAN NATIONAL CENTER FOR DISEASE
CONTROL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

GEORGIA Brief 2020

Collaboration with U.S. CDC

U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is one of the primary international partners and a long-term collaborator institutions for the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs and the Health System of Georgia in general. The collaboration with CDC / Atlanta started in early 90'es of the previous century. The U.S. CDC's structural and functional model was used during establishment of the National Center for Disease Control of Georgia in 1996.

The first mission of CDC in Georgia took place in 1994-1996. Within the scope of the mission the first cohort of Georgian epidemiologists was trained. The priority areas of the mission were: diphtheria and vaccine-preventable diseases. One among the several surveys, conducted through the support of the CDC/ Atlanta was the most remarkable - Diphtheria Survey. By that time publishing of Epidemiological Bulletin was initiated.



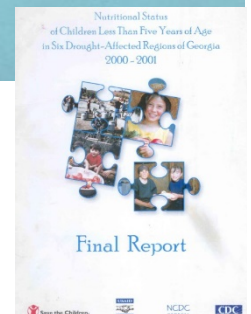
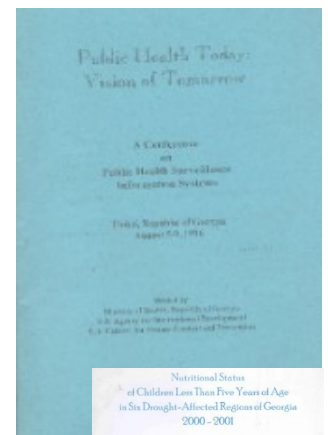
In 1996 the first joint conference with the CDC/Atlanta "Public Health Today: Vision of Tomorrow" was dedicated to public health surveillance and information systems.

Since the late 90'es three large-scale surveys (1999, 2005, 2010) on Reproductive Health have been conducted in Georgia with the technical assistance from CDC / Atlanta along with the support of other international organizations (USAID, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, AIHA). The goal of the RHS was to provide the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, international organizations, governmental and non-governmental sector working with mothers and children, with the information and indicators related to: pregnancy and child birth, sexual activity, contraception, abortions, health services for women, maternal and child health, women's health, etc.

Since 2001 through BTEP / ISTC projects in collaboration with CDC epidemiological challenges of botulism, helicobacter, AMR, Tuberculosis, amebiasis and other public health issues were investigated during the studies.



In 2009 the CDC / South Caucasus regional office was founded in the premises of the NCDC and based on FELTP - competency-based training and in-service program in applied epidemiology and public health for Georgia, the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan. The aim of the Program was to strengthen public health capacity in human and animal disease surveillance, laboratory, outbreak response, and program evaluation through a combination of classroom and on-the-job training and service. Due to this program more than 100 specialists from human and animal health sectors of the South Caucasus Region have received specialized epidemiology and laboratory training.



The CDC's goal in Georgia is to support and develop timely identification and response to outbreaks on an institutional level on daily based communication with NCDC and MoLHSA.

CDC provides ongoing technical assistance in detecting various health risk factors through surveillance and laboratory studies as well as through human resources development. The main scope of the CDC's activities in Georgia are: hepatitis, influenza, zoonotic diseases, respiratory diseases, TB surveillance, diarrheal diseases, nutrition deficiency, STDs, EDPs laboratory capacity building etc.

In 2006 the NCDC was awarded cooperative agreement "Surveillance & Response to Avian & Pandemic Influenza by National Health Authorities outside the United States" funded by CDC with a purpose to improve laboratory, epidemiological and preparedness capacity for surveillance and response to avian and pandemic influenza. The project lasted for 5 years and continued as a new

Cooperative Agreement named “Sustaining Influenza Surveillance Networks and Response to Seasonal and Pandemic Influenza by National Health Authorities outside the United States” in 2011. It is one of the most important and successful projects, which made country able to establish first sentinel surveillance system (ILI/SARI).

Since 2013 the CDC Global Disease Detection (GDD) Center has expanded collaboration with NCDC through the projects serving for further disease surveillance systems and outbreak response activities for respiratory diseases, enteric diseases, STIs, immunization etc. The GDD projects later also covered the sentinel-based study on nutrition status in pregnant and children under age 5 and school-age (12y-13y) in 4 regions of Georgia.

In 2015 in the framework of the flagship program: Hepatitis C Elimination, and in collaboration with US CDC the first nationwide hepatitis C and B sero-survey was conducted in Georgia with a primary objective to estimate the prevalence of HCV infection in general population. Revealing positive antibodies and active infection in approximately 150 thousand people became a baseline for strategic activities of the Program. The Hepatitis C Elimination Program has been initiated by the Government of Georgia together with CDC and Gilead Sciences, USA. In this regard Georgia has become a model country in elimination of Hepatitis C worldwide which has been implementing successfully for already 2 years.



In compliance with current CDC’s strategic priorities and under the umbrella of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) the further vision in collaboration with NCDC is to develop and maintain preparedness, rapid detection, response, and recovery systems to mitigate global public health emergencies; to strengthen surveillance and laboratory systems; to develop workforce.

In May, 2019 for the first time in Georgia a historical visit of the US high-rank health official was conducted. The CDC Director - Dr. Robert Redfield and his delegation was hosted by the NCDC leadership and their visit conveyed a high-level and a very successful character. In the framework of the visit, Dr. Redfield met with the Governmental officials,



the Catholicos Patriarch of All Georgia- Ilia II as well as with leaders of the counterpart organizations. He was introduced to the outcomes and achievements Georgia had made over the decades through the CDC technical and financial support, particularly in disease control and laboratory science directions. In consequence of this visit US CDC Director made a decision to establish CDC’s Eastern Europe / Central Asia Regional Platform in Georgia. The regional hub will cover the following countries: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus. The collaboration with the CDC Regional Office will be very significant and beneficial for Georgia to expand the institutionalization of disease surveillance and outbreak management in the country and with regional countries as well as to enhance the public health and research potential through cooperative grant agreements. Currently, the CDC regional office has been re-allocated at the NCDC new campus.



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