



Public Health State Programs

National Center for Disease Control and Public Health is implementing public health programs in Georgia. According to the Decree of the Government of Georgia #674 (of December, 31, 2019), following public health programs are implemented in the country in 2020:

• State Program on Early Disease Detection and Screening

The aim of the program is early detection and prevention of the spread of diseases; and establishing a healthy lifestyle in the population. The program provides: breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening and prostate cancer management; organized screening in the regions of Georgia; prevention of mild and medium mental development retardation in children of 1-6 years; diagnostics and supervision of epilepsy; piloting of retinopathy in prematurely born infants in Tbilisi; in addition, in two regions of Georgia, Bio monitoring of blood lead in children under 7 years of age and their family members under 18 years of age and pregnant family members; Promoting preventive measures and informational support; Development of information registers and electronic modules.

• State Immunization Program

The aim of the program is protection of population from vaccine-preventable infections; providing population with rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin, creating strategic stockpiles of specific vaccines and serums, distribution of vaccines, serums and consumables to the regional/district administrative units, in compliance with cold chain requirements; according to the “Strategy of global elimination and prevention of spread of measles” conducting unplanned immunization of the unimmunized or incompletely immunized population, according to the rules agreed with the the Ministry of IDPs, Labour Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Procurement and installation of cold chain equipment (including alarm systems); Implementation of information-educational activities, including management and administration of a unified electronic system for immunization and stock management.

• State Program on Epidemiological Surveillance

The aim of the program is epidemiological surveillance of communicable and non-communicable diseases in the country; ensuring early detection and prevention of diseases as well as adequate response through proper functioning of the surveillance and laboratory service-based system. The program envisages: monitoring/management of the activities carried out for surveillance, immunization and management of medical statistics through the public health centers on regional and municipal level; measures for improvement of prevention and control of Malaria and other transmissible diseases; surveillance of nosocomial infections; investigation of viral diarrheas; maintaining the sustainability of the epidemiological surveillance network for flu, responding to seasonal/pandemic flu and Covid-19 (including sentinel services); maintaining the sustainability of the epidemiological surveillance network for Hepatitis B and C, including sentinel services.



• TB Management State Program

The program aims to reduce TB morbidity, mortality and spread of infection in society, prevention of resistance to TB medicines. In the frames of the State program NCDC undertakes the following activities: surveillance;

laboratory control and sputum logistics; regional management and monitoring of TB program; purchasing of the first line (100% of total cost) and second line (up to 80% of total cost) TB medicines; monetary incentives - in order to improve the treatment adherence of patients with resistant forms of tuberculosis.

- **State Program on HIV/AIDS Management**

The aim of the program is timely detection of HIV/AIDS new cases, fight with the spread of disease and ensuring access to the treatment of the HIV/AIDS patients. In the frames of the State program NCDC undertakes the following activities: voluntary counseling and screening on HIV; purchasing test systems and consumables for screening on HIV, confirmational testing of positive cases; purchasing the first line (100% of total cost) and second line (up to 80% of total cost) ARV medicines. Pilot program for diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhoea and trichomoniasis) in people with HIV/AIDS; HIV/AIDS prevention in injecting drug users.



- **Safe Blood State Program**

The program aims at prevention of transfusion transmissible infections and ensures equal blood safety standards throughout the country; step-by-step replacement of a paid donorship with a voluntary, non-remunerated regular blood donation. Following activities are carried out under the program: HBV, HCV, HIV and Syphilis testing of the donor blood; ensuring external quality control and monitoring (including administration of the unified national donors database); implementation of a national campaign supporting and attracting voluntary regular donors. Centralized Laboratory testing of Donor Blood Based on NAT (Nucleic Acid Testing) Methodology; administering a unified electronic database of blood donors.

- **State Program on Prevention of Occupational Diseases**

The aim of the program is to protect the health of the employed population through the prevention of professional and occupational diseases and promotion of safe working environment.

- **Maternal and Child Health State Program**

The aim of the program is to reduce maternal and child mortality, decrease the number of premature deliveries and congenital abnormalities through effective patronage of pregnant women and improving geographical and financial accessibility to highly qualified medical aid and to the medicines. In the frames of the program, NCDC undertakes following activities: providing tests and consumables for testing pregnant women Hepatitis on B, C, HIV/AIDS and syphilis (as well as administering immunoglobulin against Hepatitis B to the children of HBV infected mothers); confirmational testing of positive cases of screening; newborn hearing screening.



- **State Program on Health Promotion**

The aim of the program is education and awareness raising of population on health issues and creating a health-friendly environment that enables better control and improvement of health determinants. Program envisages: Strengthening of tobacco control; prevention of substance abuse and gambling addiction; popularization and strengthening of health promotion measures.

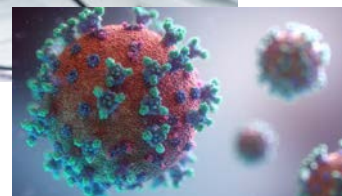
- **State Program on Hepatitis C Management**



The aim of the program is to reduce morbidity, mortality and the spread of infection caused by HCV by ensuring access to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the disease. Within the State program, NCDC provides: hepatitis C screening in accordance with the geographical accessibility; purchasing and distribution of tests and consumables for HCV screening for the ambulatory patients in the provider institutions; confirmative testing of individuals who showed HCV positive screening results.

Management of COVID 19, a new coronavirus disease

The goal of the program is to protect the population from infection (COVID-19) caused by the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). NCDC is responsible for laboratory diagnostics and epid. surveillance. It also provides laboratories with tests and materials.



Recent Key Achievements

• Budget of the public health programs 2012-2020

State Program budget administered by the NCDC has been increased almost 8 times from 2012 to 2020 and equaled to 81.923 thousand GEL. As a result, transition of obligations from the international organizations (Gavi Alliance, GFTAM, US CDC) to the state, regarding vaccination, TB and AIDS first and the second line medicines, medical supplies and reagents, as well as introduction of different activities within the State Health Care programs (Influenza surveillance, introduction of new vaccines, and the new types of services, introduction NAT testing of blood donors etc.) and also Covid-19 management became possible.

• NCDC undertaking the administration of public health programs 2011-2012

Since 2011, the NCDC's role has significantly increased in terms of health prevention programs administration. Administration and management of State programs, such as Early Disease Detection and Screening, Safe Blood, Prevention of Occupational Diseases, TB Management, HIV/AIDS, and Maternal and Child Health have been delegated to the Center. In addition, Health Promotion State Program and Screening Component of Hepatitis C Management State Program have been launched in 2015-2016. In addition, from the beginning of 2020 NCDC has implemented Covid-19 management program.

• Introduction of external quality control systems within the Safe Blood State Program 2011-2020



Since 2011, NCDC provides routine external quality control for blood banks participating in the state program through re-testing of randomly selected blood samples extracted from banks. Since 2015, a proficiency testing of blood samples by internationally accredited reference-laboratories has been introduced in the blood banks by the Center. In 2020 NAT testing started.

• Under the Safe blood State Program, Modernization of Unified Blood Donor Electronic Base has been performed and became obligatory

Existing modules of the blood donor electronic data base have been updated; new informative abstracts were added. For proper operation of modernized bases special trainings were held for employees and specialists of blood banks and medical institutions. Additionally, the notice is regulated and includes information on transfusion by means of registration in Unified Blood Donor Electronic Base.

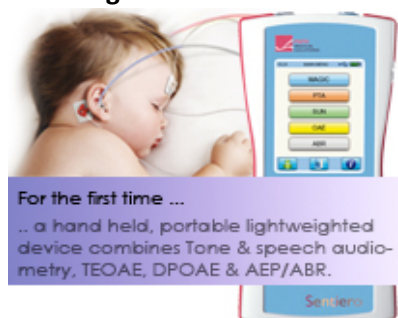
• Launching the EU funded Twinning Project "Strengthening Blood Safety System in Georgia"

The Twinning Project "Strengthening Blood Safety System in Georgia" aims to improve legislative base and perform Blood Reform. The project is being implemented by NCDC from January 15 this year.

• Introduction of newborn retinopathy screening Within the Early Detection of Disease and Screening State Program

Under the Decree of the Government of Georgia No. 638 of December 30, 2016 on "Approval of State Programs for Health Care 2017", to the Early Detection and Screening State Program has been added new activity since 2017 - the pilot of premature neonatal retinopathy screening in Tbilisi medical facilities, which includes examination of newborns for diagnosis of retinopathy, according to the screening criteria adopted by the national protocol on the "Management of retinopathy in premature newborns".

• Enlargement of newborn hearing screening within Maternal and Child Health State Program



Coverage of newborn hearing screening has been expanded from capital city to 8 additional regions (Kakheti, Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli, Imereti, Samtskhe-Djavakheti, Guria, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Adjara) through the equipping of 14 regional maternal houses which improved early detection of hearing loss and increased access to the screening services. In addition, newborn hearing screening programs funded by local municipalities (Ajara Region) and other

For the first time ...

... a hand held, portable lightweight device combines Tone & speech audiometry, TEOAE, DPOAE & AEP/ABR.

Sensory

donor programs (Imereti, Samegralo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria Regions) have been supported and coordinated by the State Programs.

Based on the order, No.01-59/n of 13.09.2017, introducing amendments to the order of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia “on Approval of Criteria for Registration of Perinatal Services and Patient Referral”, from March 2018 universal access to newborn screening is provided at all maternity houses.

• **An introduction of postal referral within TB Management State Program – 2013**

The pilot introducing a new scheme of sputum specimen transportation from TB centers to laboratories was introduced by NCDC in three regions of Georgia in 2013 and was expanded across the country since March, 2016.

Under this scheme, LTD Georgian Post carries out the specimen transportation in accordance with biosafety norms.

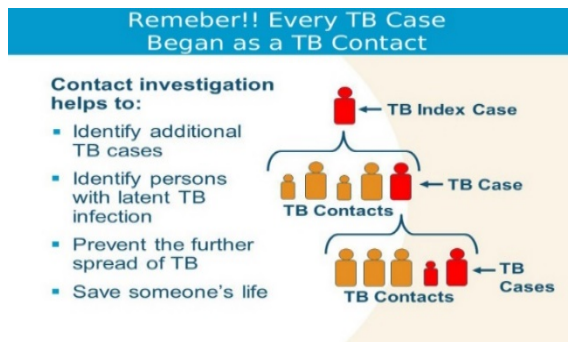
The new mechanism of specimen referral resulted in the:

1. Reduction in the time required for patient diagnosis (both for bacterioscopy and mycobacterial culturing methods);
2. Improvement of treatment initiation timing;
3. Increase in quality of laboratory analyses through achieving proportional workload of laboratory capacities;
4. Decrease of specimen transportation costs.

WHO acknowledged Georgian new transportation mechanism as the best practice and published it as a guidance for other countries.

• **Introduction of new mechanism for contact tracing of TB patients within TB Management State Program – 2014**

Since 2012, National Center for Disease Control and Public Health bears the responsibility for contact tracing of TB patient. In this point of view, a new methodology for epidemiological surveillance of TB patient contacts has been introduced since 2014, which implies epidemiological investigation of TB patient contacts with specially designed questionnaire and their referral to the specialized medical facilities through providing appropriate informational and educational work.



• **Upgrading the Cold Chain infrastructure within the Immunization State Program**

In 2014, on the basis of Resolution of the Government of Georgia No.1799 of 30 September 2014, for the first time in the history of independent Georgia, a cold chain equipment recommended by the WHO was purchased with the budgetary funds within the frames of Immunization State Program, through UNICEF procurement mechanism. As a result, approximately 30% of country’s cold chain infrastructure has been updated. In 2017 State allocated funds for further renewal of the cold chain infrastructure, which was successfully implemented.

• **Vaccines and injection materials continuity supply within the Immunization State Program**

From 2013 all routine immunization vaccines (except Hexavalent and Tetraxim) are procured through UNICEF flexible procurement mechanism and all vaccines procured for routine vaccination are WHO prequalified. On November 21-25, 2016, the UNICEF experts evaluated the procurement system of vaccines in Georgia. As a result of assessment, procurement process was evaluated as effective, open and transparent, and the process of vaccines predicting and budgeting was evaluated as exemplary.

• **Implementation of HealthCare Electronic Base** for Cancer management, Hepatitis C management, Blood donor’s management, HIV management, immunization and vaccine storage management, covid-19 Lab diagnostic management.



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

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