WHO Romania Monthly Newsletter

September 2023 Highlights

- *WHO Romania appointed a Romanian midwife to provide services at RomExpo in Bucharest and WHO Galati midwives have extended consultations to Ukrainian women in Constanta to address identified needs for reproductive health services.*

- *WR Dr Clarinval and WHO staff attended the NATO event on '*Disaster Management and Resilience in Case of a Nuclear Incident'. *WHO Romania presented on 'WHO Guidelines for Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Event of a Nuclear Emergency'.*

- *WHO Romania launched the 'Training of Trainers' programme as part of the Health Service Management component of the NRRP. The 6 modules are taught by European experts and academics and hosted by the National Institute of Health Service Management.*

Emergency Response

WHO Midwifery Services

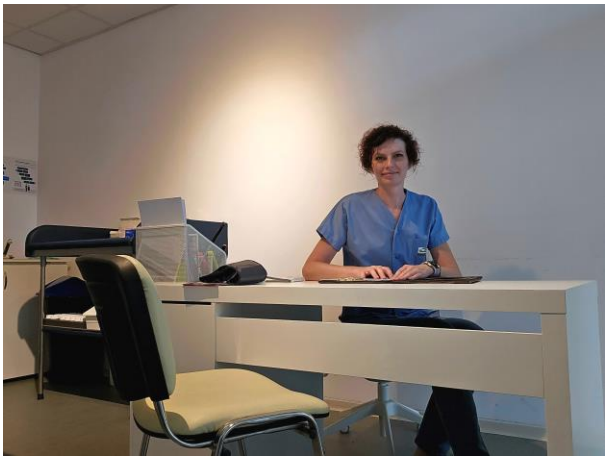
As of September 2023, WHO midwives in Galati have extended their service availability to Constanta, whilst an additional WHO midwife has been appointed in Bucharest.

WHO midwives provide a range of free-of-charge support services, such as

- antenatal advice and labor & birth planning
- postnatal support including guidance on newborn care
- referral support for family doctors / obstetricians / gynaecologists
- family planning
- social care, and assistance in cases of bullying and domestic, social, financial, sexual, and other types of violence

in line with WHO's commitment to facilitate equitable access to high quality maternal & reproductive healthcare for Ukrainians.

1 - WHO midwifes from Galati are now also providing services in Constanta since September 2023.



2 - WHO has appointed a new Romanian midwife, Victoria Schiere for RomExpo in Bucharest.

Refugee Response Challenges

Despite Ukrainian's legal entitlement to healthcare in Romania, WHO has become aware of issues impairing their ability to receive and medical providers' capacity to provide care. WHO Romania county teams liaised with Ukrainian beneficiaries, health partners and Romanian health providers to identify key issues related to access or provision of healthcare.

Over 25 separate issues have been compiled and are currently being discussed with national and subnational authorities:

- T*echnical issues with the NHIH platform*: Many Ukrainians have had their insurance status invalidated on the platform, despite having accessed health services in the past.
- *Limited understanding of refugee healthcare entitlements:* WHO has received reports of healthcare workers not providing entitled care to refugees. This has included reimbursable prescriptions, specialised consultations and hospital procedures.
- *Reluctance of medical providers to use phone translation services:* Language continues to be a significant barrier to accessing care for Ukrainians. Whilst some counties have established free of charge phone translation services, many clinics are reportedly reluctant to use these services due to concerns about medico-legal ramifications.

WHO Romania County Missions

- WHO Representative, Dr. Caroline Clarinval met with the Director General of the Cluj Health Insurance House, Dr. Lucia Chirilă and Family Doctor, Dr. Natalia Danilov to discuss the medical services available to refugees in Cluj, key service gaps, and potential areas in which WHO Romania could support local authorities. Key challenges identified include technical issues with the NHIH platform, limited understanding of refugee health entitlements by Romanian healthcare providers, and language barriers.

- The WHO Iasi county coordinator, Georgeta Tomulesco, conducted two missions to the Sculeni and Albita border crossings to assess the existing health infrastructure, identify service gaps and determine avenues for greater support. A key finding included the routine movement of Ukrainians across the border to obtain affordable medicines. Given that under the temporary protection measures Ukrainian citizens are eligible for discounted pharmaceuticals, this finding further emphasises the difficulties faced by Ukrainians in registering for and receiving health services in Romania.

3 - WHO Representative Dr Clarinval met the Director General of the Cluj Health Insurance House, Dr. Lucia Chirilă in Cluj-Napoca.

4 - WHO Representative Dr Clarinval met family doctor Dr. Natalia Danilov in Cluj- Napoca.

High Profile Visits

WHO Romania at RomExpo

WHO cultural mediators and the WHO midwife at the RomExpo centre in Bucharest support Ukrainian refugees with accessing primary and specialised healthcare, midwifery and psychological support services.

In September 2023, the RomExpo centre received a number of high profile visits, including the First Lady of Poland, Mrs. Agata Kornhauser-Duda as well as H.E Hiroshi Ueda, Ambassador of Japan to Romania and MIYAVI, Japanese musician and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador.

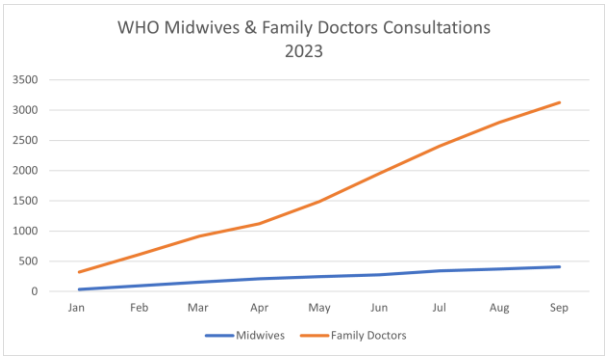
5 - The First Lady of Poland, Mrs. Agata Kornhauser-Duda, visiting the RomExpo centre in Bucharest on 7 September.

6 - MIYAVI, Japanese musician and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador, visiting the RomExpo centre in Bucharest on 22 September.

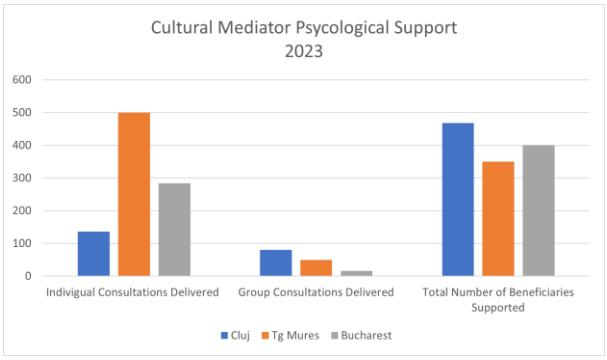
WHO Health Programs: Monthly Data Insights

Throughout September

- WHO supported family doctors conducted 329 consultations for Ukrainian refugees.
- WHO midwives in Galati provided consultations for 37 Ukrainian women and facilitated referrals to specialised care on behalf of 33 beneficiaries.
- WHO cultural mediators delivered 96 in-person counselling sessions and provided guidance to 280 Ukrainians on how to navigate the Romanian health system.



7 - WHO Midwives & Family Doctor Consultations



8 - Psychological support sessions provided by cultural mediators

National Recovery & Resilience Plan (NRRP)

Data & Digital Health

- 9 members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) for the National eHealth Strategy for Romania attended the *'2nd WHO Symposium on the Future of Health Systems in a Digital Era in the European Region'* allowing participants to engage in discussions with digital experts and other professionals from across the European region on how digital health can transform European health systems.

- WHO Romania organised and facilitated the second meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) for the National eHealth Strategy. 39 key stakeholders convened for a deep-dive into telemedicine and electronic health records in Bucharest. The session was opened by WHO

Representative, Dr Caroline Clarinval and Secretary of State, Ministry of Health, Dr Alexandru Rogobete.

9 - Representatives of the Digital Health TWG at the 2nd WHO Symposium on the Future of Health Systems in a Digital Era in the European Region.

10 - Capture from the National eHealth Strategy, Telemedicine and Electronic Health Records meeting with the Digital Health TWG.

Health Service Management

Two Training of Trainers (ToT) were conducted in Bucharest on 11-15 September and 25-29 September respectively:

- The *'Ethics and Integrity in Healthcare Management'* ToT at the National Institute for Health Services Management (INMSS) provided an opportunity for representatives of medical educational institutions and trainers in the health care field to explore fundamental issues in ethics and integrity management in the health sector under the coordination of Prof. Antonino Vaccaro, Department of Business Ethics, IESE Business School Barcelona.
- The *'Public Health and Health Policy'* ToT took place at INMSS and allowed 40 Romanian health care trainers and representatives of the medical education institutions to strengthen their knowledge and receive the latest information in the field from experts at Nova University in Lisbon.

11 - Prof. Antonino Vaccaro, IESE Business School Barcelona, teaching the first module on Ethics and Integrity.

12 - Prof. Christopher Millett, Professor of Public Health at Imperial College London, on Healthcare Systems and Policies.

Country Office Events & Communications

Conferences

- '*Disaster Management and Resilience in Case of a Nuclear Incident'.* Health Operations Manager, Dr. Silvia Gatscher, presented on 'WHO Guidelines for Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Event of a Nuclear Emergency'.
- *'Romanian Artificial Intelligence Day'.* WHO participated in the 'AI in Health' panel, sharing WHO guidelines for the ethical use of AI and possible applications for improving public health in Romania.
- *US Embassy Round Table 'Act Now to Make an Impact - Romania Without Hepatitis C'.* Health Operations Manager, Dr. Silvia Gatscher presented on key challenges facing healthcare workers and policy makers in managing and eliminating hepatitis in Romania.
- *Regional Meeting on 'WHO Guidelines Dissemination for Priority Countries in WHO European Region'* and *'ECDC / WHO Meeting on HIV in Europe and Central Asia in the Era of SDGs'.* Organised by WHO EURO and ECDC with the aim to operationalise global / regional HIV goals and review progress on achieving these targets.
- '*Immunisation Network Convening':* The event explored new ways of working across all 3 levels of WHO, partners and stakeholders with a view to address and minimise immunisation inequities.

13 - ECDC / WHO Meeting on HIV in Europe and Central Asia in the Era of SDGs

14 - US Embassy Round Table 'Act Now to Make an Impact - Romania Without Hepatitis C'

15 - Disaster Management and Resilience in Case of a Nuclear Incident

16 - Immunisation Network Convening

Further Activities

- WHO Romania visited the Bagdasar-Arseni Hospital to support the setting up the five patient monitors procured by WHO Romania. The hospital emphasised the significant impact these monitors will have on isolated COVID-19 patients.
- WHO Representative, Dr. Clarinval and WHO staff met with a delegation from 'The Association of Korean Medicine', accompanied by the Ambassador of the Korean Republic to Bucharest, HE Rim Kap-Soo to discuss opportunities of traditional medicine in the context of health care in Romania.
- The WHO SRH consultant, Dr. Nicola Morgan, and national health response coordinator, Georgiana Afumateanu, attended a meeting organised by the national Agency for Equality between Men and Women (ANES). The meeting aimed to bring together women led CSOs, UN agencies and ANES to discuss pathways for collaboration on the GBV aspects of the refugee response and ways to increase awareness of sexual violence centres in Romania.
- WHO Representative Dr. Caroline Clarinval attended the meeting organised by the National Authority for Quality Management in Health Care (ANMCS) on 15 September to mark World Patient Safety Day 2023, together with representatives of patient organisations, central authorities, health employers and trade unions.

17 - WHO Romania staff visited the Bagdasar-Arseni Hospital to support the setting up the five patient monitors

18 - WCO Romania met with Korean Ambassador to Romania E.S Rim Kap-soo and representatives of the Korean Association of Medicine

19 - WR Dr Caroline Clarinval alongside the ANMCS President Valentin-Florin Ciocan at the meeting held with the occassion of WPSD 2023.

Keep in touch

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