WHO Romania Monthly Newsletter

April 2024 Highlights

- The 31st Standing Regional Committee for Europe took place in Bucharest on 25-26 April. As part of the event, Minister of Health Prof Rafila signed the WHO Country Cooperation Strategy together with WHO RD, Dr. Hans Kluge and WR Dr Clarinval.
- WHO Romania launched a free-of-charge translation hotline for medical consultations for Ukrainian refugees throughout Romania.
- WHO Romania conducted Stress Management Workshops in Sibiu to address the growing rates of burnout among healthcare workers.
- WHO Romania held an in-person health working group meeting in Bucharest to promote cooperation and coordination between health partner.

Emergency Response

Translation Hotline for UKR Medical Consultations

Language barriers have been identified as one of the biggest obstacles to healthcare access for Ukrainians in Romania, limiting their ability to explain health issues to Romanian healthcare providers, request necessary care or provide consent for medical procedures. Language barriers have also frequently been cited as the main reason for medical providers not treating Ukrainians.

In response, WHO Romania launched a UKR-ROM translation hotline on 15 April - a unique initiative amongst refugee-receiving countries. The hotline has already enjoyed significant interest and uptake, with over 50 translations provided during medical appointments in the first 2 weeks and interpreters booked for over a month in advance.

Stress Management Workshop

WHO Romania continued the roll out of its workshops on stress management for healthcare workers across the country, aiming to address the growing rates of burnout and fatigue among healthcare workers. The module titled 'Doing What Matters in Times of Stress' includes interactive group activities as well as role plays equipping participants with practical tools, techniques, and strategies to prioritise self-care and manage stress effectively.

80 healthcare workers from Sibiu County Emergency Clinical Hospital, Sibiu Pediatric Hospital, and Sibiu Pneumology Hospital participated in the workshops.

In-person Health Working Group

WHO Romania has chaired the Health / SRH Working Group throughout the refugee response, ensuring health partners have a platform to coordinate their programming, raise challenges and share lessons learnt,

In April 2024, WHO Romania invited health partners for the first in-person meeting of 2024. The full-day event facilitated communication between participants and promoted open discussion and dialogue on a range of issues facing the refugee response such as language barriers and access to specialist services. Findings from this event will be used to inform the refugee response over the coming months.

Communication for Vaccination

Although Ukrainians with Temporary Protections Status and their children are eligible to receive vaccinations free of charge via the Romanian national healthcare system, the uptake among the refugee population has been limited. This is in part driven by vaccine hesitancy resulting from the spread of misinformation, and limited trust in vaccine providers.

To improve vaccination demand within the community, the WHO EURO VPD team delivered a training to 35 humanitarian workers and participants from the Brasov Public Health Directorate on how to engage with vulnerable communities, build public trust in vaccinations and combat misinformation and disinformation related to immunisation.

WHO Romania Campaign European Immunisation Week

Simona, a Romanian mother of 3, whose middle child was recently hospitalised due to measles, makes a heartfelt appeal for the need to vaccinate children to offer them better protection. She recounts the hospital stay, how difficulty the experience was for a small child and emphasises the need to act now in order to stop "such a classic disease as measles from getting back into fashion". The campaign was endorsed by the Ministry of Health and the National Institute for Public Health and featured on TV, Radio, as well as online and on social media platforms.

https://sway.cloud.microsoft/8Pm3aDFsR7laidm4#content=CmVGT3uxpPgAXD

1 - Extended version of the EIW campaign video.

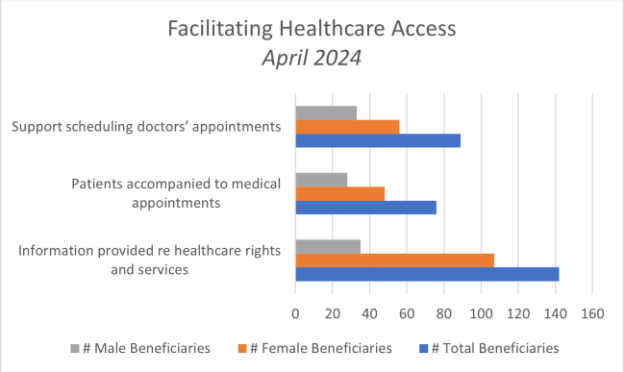
Romanian Vaccination Schedule

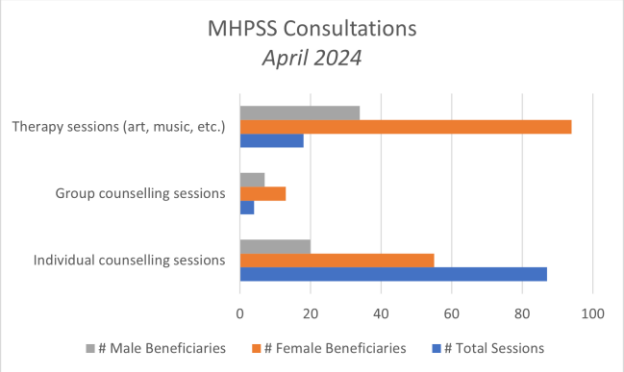
Differences between the Romanian and Ukrainian vaccination schedule have caused confusion among many Ukrainians residing in Romania and contributed to the low vaccination uptake within the refugee community. To address this issue and enhance understanding, WHO Romania conducted an interview with a family doctor and asked her to explain the national vaccination schedule and how Ukrainian children can be integrated. The video version of the interview, with Ukrainian subtitles, was launched on Ukrainian refugee social channels as part of WHO Romania's campaign for European Immunisation week.

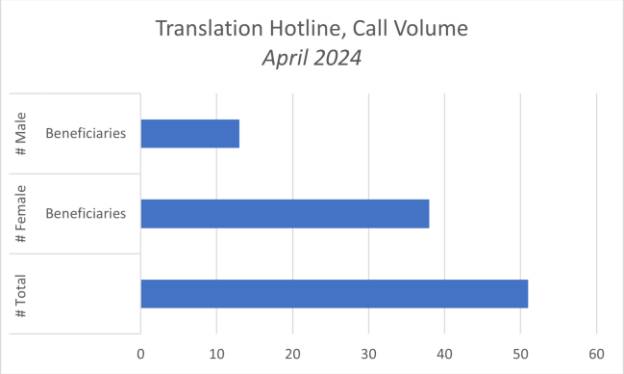
https://sway.cloud.microsoft/8Pm3aDFsR7laidm4#content=0T1adrFRLCfMpe

WHO Health Programs- Data Insights for April 2024

- WHO cultural mediators delivered 87 individual and 4 group psychosocial counselling sessions and organised 18 art, music and cultural therapy sessions for Ukrainians.
- WHO cultural mediators supported 142 Ukrainians with accessing national healthcare services.
- The new WHO translation hotline conducted 51 translations during medical appointments between 15-30 April.
- WHO supported family doctors in Bucharest, Suceava, Galati, Constanta and Brasov delivered 241 consultations to Ukrainians and WHO midwives in Galati facilitated referrals to specialist care for 17 Ukrainian women.







National Recovery & Resilience Plan (NRRP)

NRRP Steering Committee

The 2nd NRRP Project Steering Committee convened on 25 April, chaired by WHO RD Dr Kluge and Romanian Minister of Health Prof Rafila. Members of the Committee included WR Dr Clarinval, WHO EURO CPS Director Dr Azzopardi, Secretary of State Dr Rogobete, along with MoH representatives and WHO Europe and WHO Romania colleagues. The committee took stock of NRRP progress and set course for the next 6 months in the key work areas.

Heath System Financing

On 19 April, a regional Integrity Workshop with hospital managers, economic directors and public health authorities was held in Iasi. Health Minister Prof Rafila and Secretary of State Dr Rogobete as well as the US Department of Justice, US Embassy and an Expert from WHO HQ attended the event. This is the third workshop dedicated to raise awareness on how integrity, anti-corruption and legislative measures impact the health care sector.

Quality of Care

WHO was appointed a permanent invitee to Technical Working Group for the Health Quality Fund (HQF). The HQF is an important component assuring high quality of care by setting out requirements for hospitals for reporting and performance. The WHO Quality of Care and Patient Safety Team in Athens is preparing tools and training materials to train health auditors and hospital staff on quality management in Q3, 2024.

Country Office Events & Communications

World Health Day Celebration

In celebration of World Health Day, and to mark the end of WHO's 75th birthday year, WHO Romania hosted an event for government representatives, national and international partners, colleagues and friends.

The event was attended by over 70 participants including Presidential Adviser Prof. Paun and Secretary of State Mr Bradistan and included a concert by the Orchestra Medicilor Dr. Ermil Nichifor as well as an exhibition illustrating key historic moments related to health in Romania.

WHO Romania Country Cooperation Strategy

Regional Director Dr Hans Kluge and Minister of Health Prof Rafila signed the Country Cooperation Strategy 2024-2030 during the SCRC in Bucharest on 26 April. The CCS was developed jointly with the Ministry of Health, setting out the collaboration framework between WHO and Romania and providing strategic health directions for the coming 7 years.

Further Country Office Activities

- WHO Romania translated key WHO guidelines on mental health to support mental healthcare provision in Romania.
- WHO attended the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference in Sibiu, providing insights on drug use prevention.
- WHO Romania attended the Romania Diabetes Forum on 9 April and presented ways to address key diabetes risk factors.
- WHO Romania participated in a review of the Ukrainian refugee response together with WHO colleagues from neighbouring refugee-receiving countries in Warsaw on 17-18 April. The event provided an opportunity for sharing of best practices and identification of lessons learnt.
- WHO Romania attended the conference "*Support for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention"*, organised by ANES on 17 April. During the event, WR Dr Clarinval reiterated WHO's mandate to address GBV as a public health issue.

Stay in Touch

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