

SUMMARY OF THE GUIDELINES FOR REFERRAL HEALTH CARE IN LEBANON

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

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Introduction:

UNHCR in Lebanon plays a pivotal role in facilitating and advocating for refugees' access to existing services and healthcare providers, ensuring that refugees known to UNHCR have access to essential health services.

Referral health care is an essential part of access to comprehensive health services in alignment with UNHCR Global Strategy for Public Health 2021-25.

Guiding Principles:

- A public health approach is required providing the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people for guiding the referral policy and procedures considering resources and budget are always limited.
- Primary Health Care (PHC) should be promoted as the entry point for all medical referrals.
- The level of referral health care for refugees should be equitable to that of the vulnerable host community.
- Integrate with national services as much as possible.
- Referral is always a medical decision.
- For all types of referrals, prognosis is the most important criteria followed by cost.
- Ensure transparency of referral policies and procedures.
- Confidentiality and informed consent for all referrals.
- Cost sharing scheme with refugees

Persons Eligible for Referral Care Support:

Refugees who are known to UNHCR in Lebanon and with active UNHCR file numbers or barcodes are eligible for UNHCR healthcare coverage. This includes children born in Lebanon whose fathers are refugees known to UNHCR, even though their mothers are not. Additionally, this includes children whose mother is a refugee known to UNHCR when their father's status is not known.

Conditions Eligible for Referral Care Support:

- Obstetric care/Deliveries & Newborn care
- Acute and Urgent lifesaving conditions including trauma/injuries and infectious diseases.

Provision of Referral Care Support:

- **Third Party Administrator (TPA)** - is the link between the refugee patient and the hospital where he/she receives health care. Manages the financial and medical audit of care provided and pays the hospitals on behalf of UNHCR. Current TPA is NextCare and can be reached 24/7 via hotline: **01-504020**.
- **UNHCR Hospital Network** - network of public and private hospitals throughout the country where refugees can receive subsidized hospital care. The hospitals are contracted by the TPA. UNHCR support is provided only through the contracted network of hospitals. The list of hospitals is revised by UNHCR on regular basis. The latest version can be found here at [UNHCR Network Hospital](#)

Referral Health Care Support:

- UNHCR supports provision of referral health care through a cost-sharing mechanism.

UNHCR contributes by paying a proportion of the hospital charges which is 60% of costs above 100 USD. The first USD 100 of the bill is paid by the beneficiary.

- If the beneficiary's share reaches USD 800, UNHCR covers the remainder of the costs up to a maximum of USD 5,000 total bill for all conditions and USD 8,000 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and burns.
- For war wounded refugees, UNHCR covers 100% of costs (including the first 100 USD) up to USD 5,000 maximum.
- Survivors of Gender Based Violence – covered 100% for care of injuries sustained, clinical management of rape (CMR), forensic investigations and any follow-up needed requiring referral health care (including deliveries).
- Patients suffering from primary Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) – covered 100% for care related to the malnutrition.
- Psychiatric Patients – covered 90% for acute inpatient psychiatric care.
- Deliveries/obstetric care, UNHCR covers 50%. The cost of delivery care in each hospital is available at [Hospital Referral Care - UNHCR Lebanon](#)

Exceptional Care Committee (ECC):

UNHCR has established an ECC to review and decide on complicated and costly cases for which prognosis is difficult to foresee. It consists of anonymous expert medical professionals, UNHCR public health doctors and representatives of the TPA.

ECC decisions are primarily based on:

- Necessity and duration of suggested treatment
- Concomitant diseases & age
- Prognosis & Cost
- Feasibility and evidence base of the treatment plan

Monitoring and Evaluation of the referral program:

Main data sources for monitoring include TPA medical and financial database and surveys/assessments conducted by UNHCR including the regular exit interviews with beneficiaries, Health Access and Utilization Survey (HAUS), hospital visits and audits conducted by UN internal and external audit agencies.

Complaints Feedback Mechanism:

- **Third Party Administrator (TPA);** The TPA is responsible for establishing and maintaining a complaints and feedback mechanism and take necessary actions. Received complaints and actions taken are shared with UNHCR on a regular basis.
 - TPA customer care line dedicated for complaints by the beneficiaries is **01-504025** and **01-504020** is the general TPA customer care hotline operational 24/7.
- **UNHCR** has its own mechanisms for receiving complaints from refugees. These include; through UNHCR national call center, Help website claim form, in person complaints at UNHCR reception center, regular exit interviews with refugee beneficiaries of the program, the outreach volunteers and through the Inspector General's Office (IGO) email: inspector@unhcr.org & <http://www.unhcr.org/php/complaints.php>

Support provided by NGO partners:

Other Health NGOs may support financially or facilitate access to services that are outside UNHCR support.

Examples where Health NGOs can support.

- Beneficiaries who cannot pay the patient share of hospital bills.
- Beneficiaries for whom the cost of treatment exceeds the UNHCR limit of support.
- Beneficiaries who suffer from conditions not covered by UNHCR.

Legal Issues:

UNHCR and the TPA shall not be held responsible for malpractice, physical or mental harm or adverse outcomes of medical interventions provided by the contracted hospitals or any third-party hospital that have admitted refugees. All these incidents will have to be dealt with between the treating hospitals/physician and the patient or his/her family. Support may be provided by UNHCR partners to obtain legal assistance in these matters.

End.