

4th HEPATITIS C
TECHNICAL ADVISORY
GROUP
TAG Meeting

OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS OF THE HCV ELIMINATION PROGRAM IN GEORGIA



Dr. David Sergeenko
Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied
Territories, Labor, Health, and Social Affairs
Tbilisi, Georgia

HCV Elimination Program – best example of universality



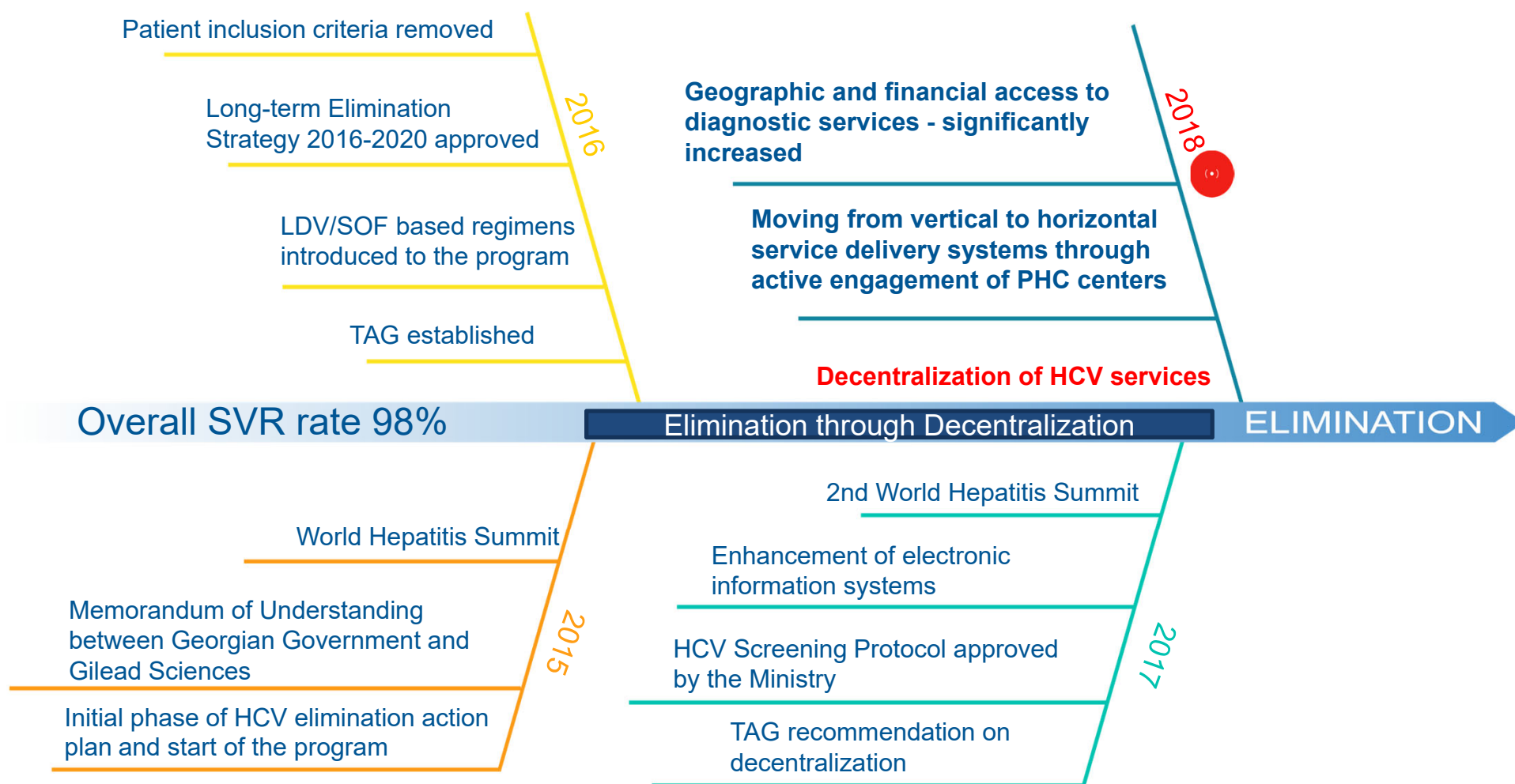
The country of Georgia has high burden of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection. The nationwide seroprevalence survey conducted in 2015, indicated 5.4% of adults (approximately 150,000 persons) with active HCV infection (RNA positive).

Characteristic	n	%	Estimated # nationwide ≥18 years
Anti-HCV+	433	7.7%	215,000
HCV RNA+	311	5.4%	150,000



Road Towards HCV Elimination

42% (1,2 million) of adult population is screened on HCV
51,000 people (40% of the target) are enrolled in treatment



Public/private partnership

- ❑ **Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Health, Labour and Social Affairs**
- ❑ **National Center for Disease Control and Public Health**
- ❑ **US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
- ❑ **Gilead Sciences, Inc.**
- ❑ **WHO-HQ, WHO-EURO**
- ❑ **HCV Elimination Program provider facilities**

Others

- ❑ Abbott Diagnostics
- ❑ Becton Dickinson (BD)
- ❑ University of Bristol, UK
- ❑ Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO)
- ❑ Liver Institute & Foundation for Education and Research (LIFER)
- ❑ Global Fund for AIDS, TB & Malaria
- ❑ Foundation for New Innovative Diagnostics (FIND)
- ❑ Blood Systems Research Inst.
- ❑ CDC Foundation
- ❑ Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET)
- ❑ ENABL-ED

Recent progress in State HCV Elimination Program

2018

HCV Confirmatory testing (HCV cAg/RNA PCR) – became free-of charge

HCV genotyping – became free-of charge

Diagnostic algorithm was simplified – reduced cost of diagnostic tests

HCV testing (screening + confirmation) for all hospitalized patients is performed based on one stop-shop principle

Full financial support for certain populations groups (war veterans, socially vulnerable persons) - 70% copayment by government, 30% - by the municipalities

Expanded screening

Primary healthcare system

Tandem testing - HCV/HIV/TB

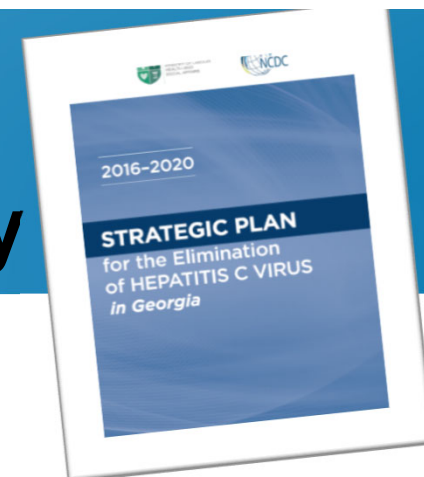
Public Service Halls

Decentralization of treatment services to primary healthcare and harm reduction centers – improved geographical accessibility

Multifunctional information systems in place

Fully web-based system for patient enrollment – waiting time significantly reduced

National HCV Elimination Strategy



Goal

Elimination of HCV by ensuring prevention, diagnostics and treatment of the disease

Targets

90-95-95

By 2020

- ✓ **90%** of people living with HCV are diagnosed
- ✓ **95%** of those diagnosed are treated
- ✓ **95%** of those treated are cured

Promote advocacy, awareness and education, and partnerships for HCV associated resource mobilization

Prevent HCV transmission

Identify Persons Infected with HCV

Improve HCV Laboratory Diagnostics

Provide HCV Care and Treatment

Improve HCV Surveillance

HCV-related advocacy and awareness raising, establishment of Hepatitis C Cured Patients Association

- Multi-Sectoral communication working group created
- Joint strategic communication action plan developed



- Communication slogan, message box and branding developed, reviewed and implemented in joint communication activities
- More than 200 media activities – TV and radio reporting, TV shows with invited guests and articles in printed media

- Short text messages regularly sent to entire population as a reminder to get screened
- Active Social media educational campaign - Hepatitis C Facebook page (with up to 120 000 reaches and 16,486 likes)



Prevent HCV transmission

Infection Prevention and Control

- Renewed IPC guideline will be finalized by January, 2019
- IPC training course for physicians and nurses developed by Tbilisi State Medical University and Georgian Epidemiologists and Infection Control Specialists Association
- IPC trainings for Georgian clinicians performed by NCDC
- Throughout the country, all officially registered non-healthcare facilities are being monitored and controlled for compliance on IPC measures

Antimicrobial resistance

- Point-Prevalence Study performed on antibiotic consumption, HAI and AMR in 10 clinics
- “Sanford Guide for Antimicrobial Therapy 2018” has been translated into Georgian and Published
 - 3,000 copies will be distributed to the clinics in Georgia
 - Official electronic version of the guide will be available online



Blood safety



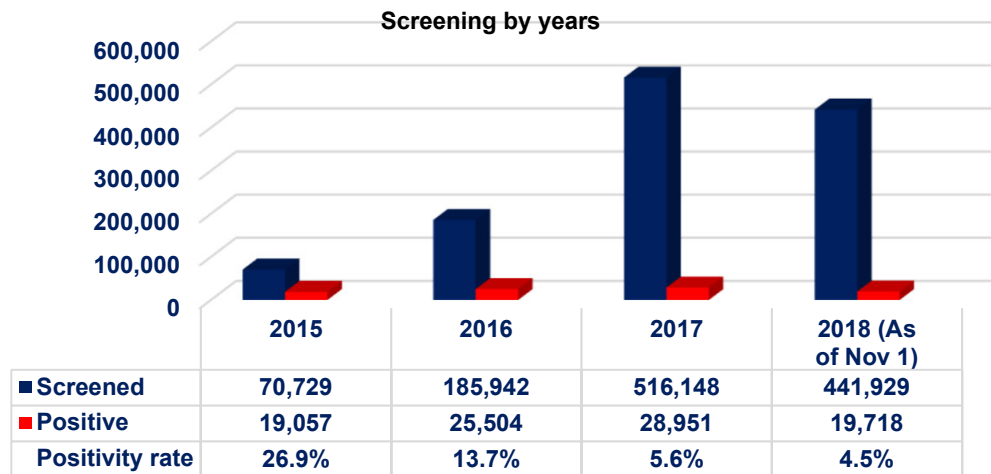
Confirmatory testing of all anti-HCV positive blood donations – improved linkage to in-depth diagnostic and treatment services

Introduction of Unified Electronic Donor Database – established infection traceability

Expert mission organized by the European Commission's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX) – recommendations developed and presented to Georgian health authorities

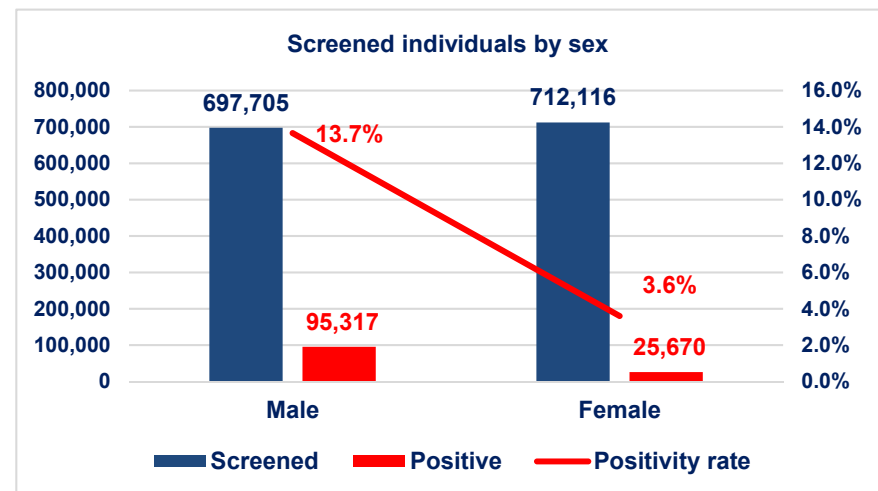
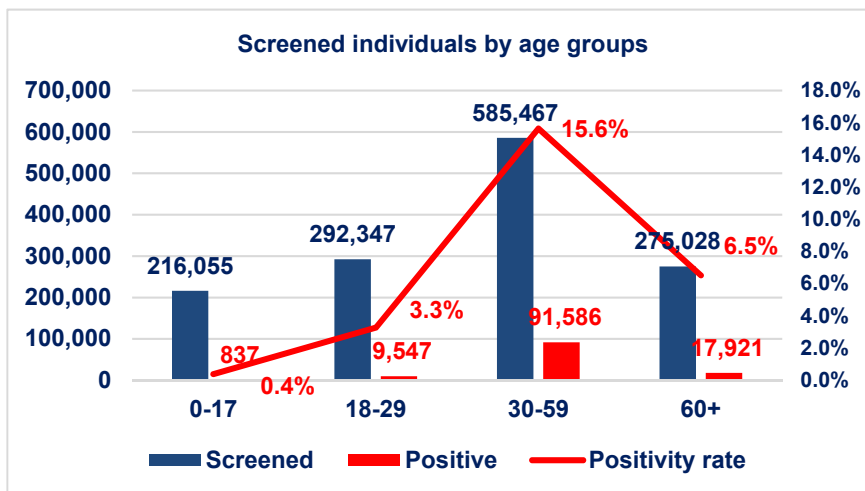
Decision signed by the European Commission to grant Georgia a Twinning Assistance in Blood Safety field aiming to approximate national blood regulations to EU respective directives

HCV Screening among Georgian population



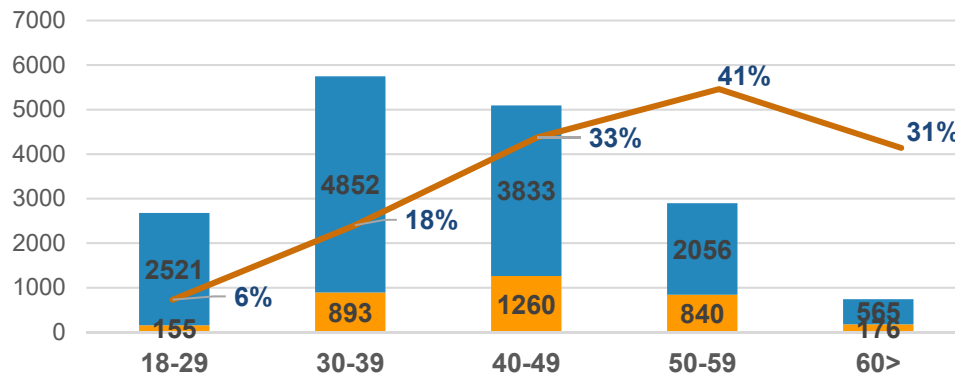
Since 2015, **over 2,2 million** screenings have been registered in the **Unified Screening Registry**

≈**1,4 million** individuals have been screened with positivity rate – **8.6%**



PWID screening in Harm Reduction Program

HCV screening by age groups



16 Harm Reduction Centers



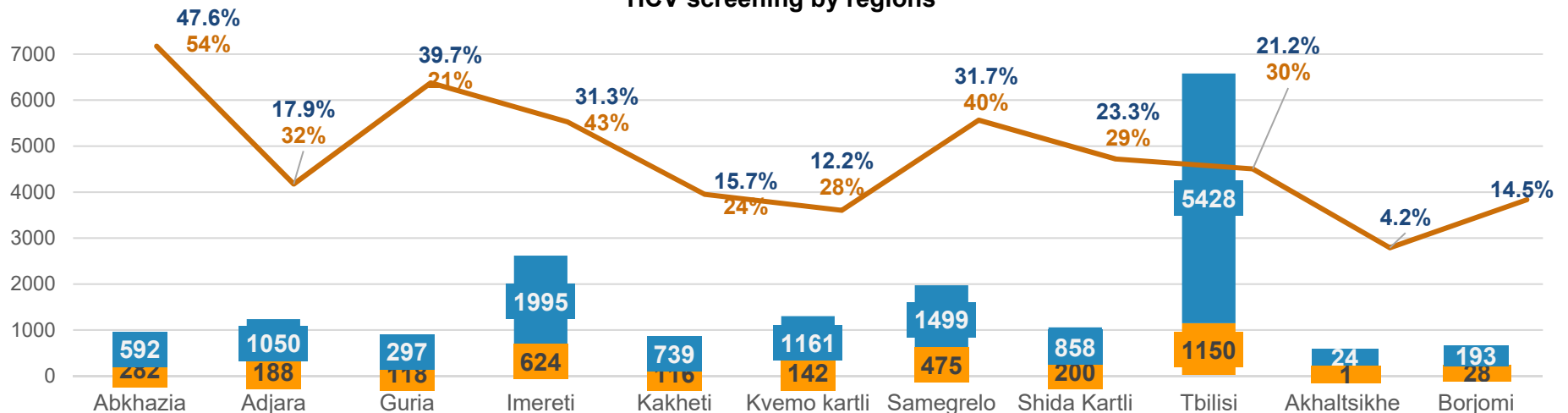
8 Mobile Units



>80 Harm Reduction Workers



HCV screening by regions

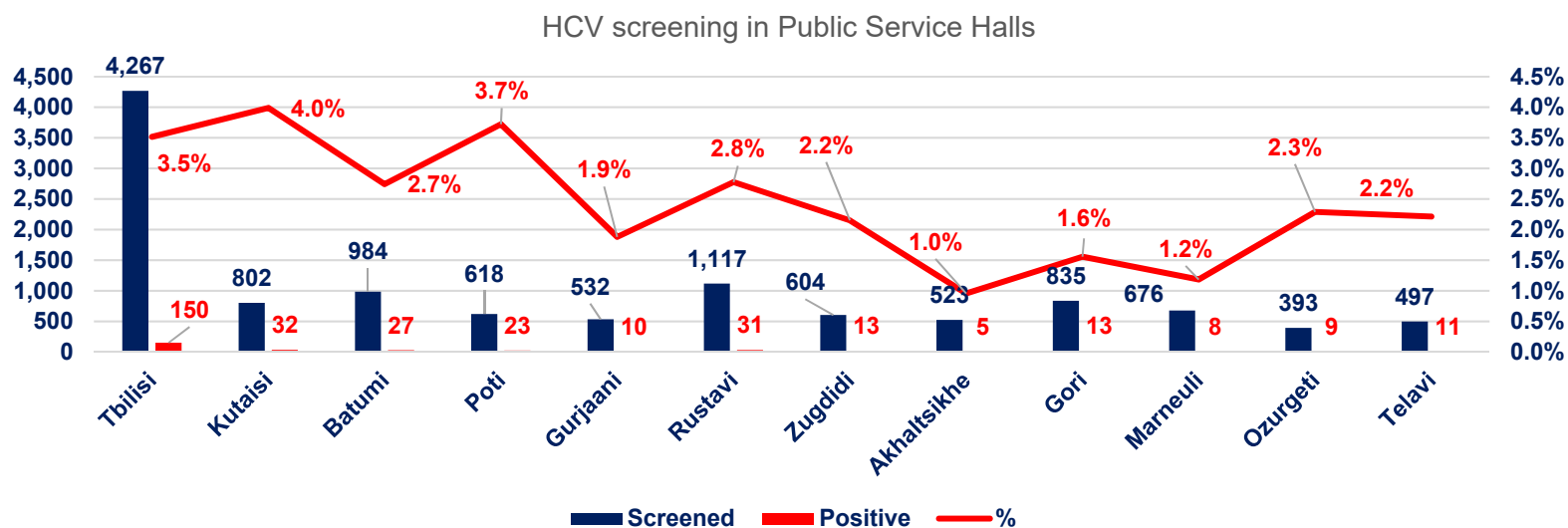


- Period: 2018 As of October 1st
- Number of Individuals (Unique IDs)
- Source: GHRN Data

- Positive
- Total number Screened
- % of AB Positive

Screening in Public Service Halls

Free HCV screening is provided in 12 Public Service Halls across the country since October 22, 2018



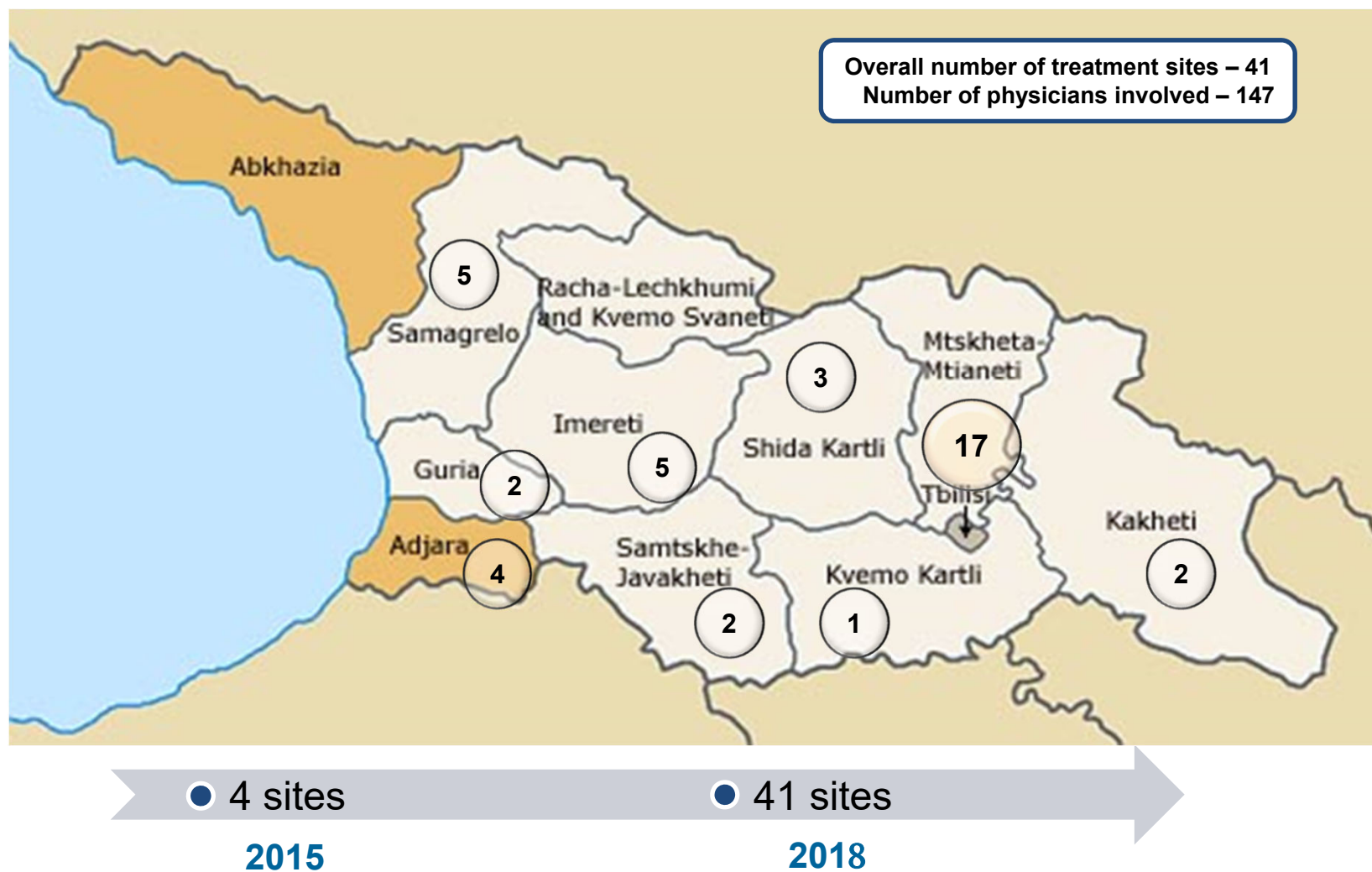
Strengthening of laboratory capacities

- Clinical laboratories' registration and licensing process initiated within the HCV Elimination Program
- More than 500 laboratory service providers registered in HCV database
- National External Quality Assurance program introduced at Lugar Center



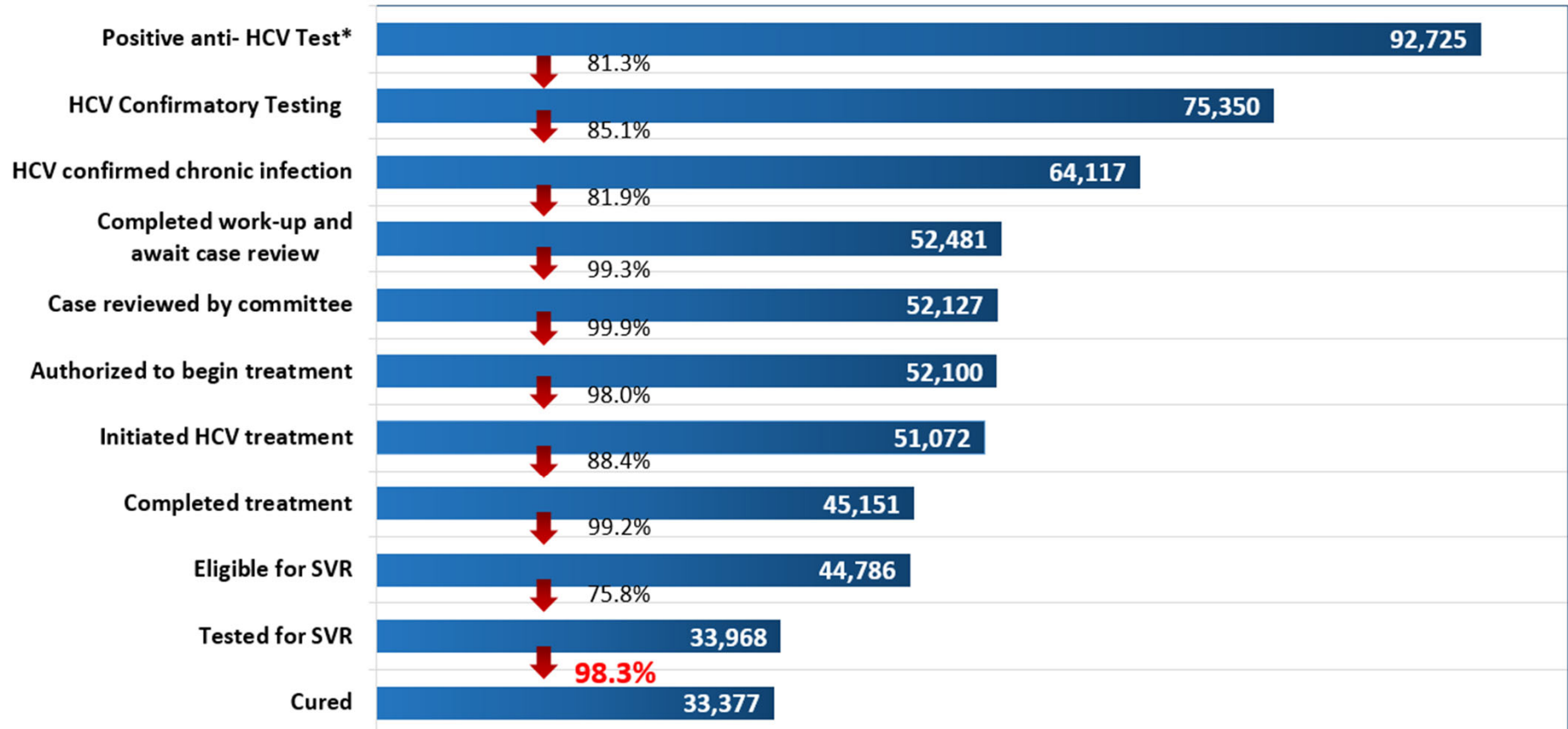
- 16 PCR Laboratories (14 private and 2 public) within the HCV Elimination Program
- Centralized system for confirmatory testing for all hospitalized patients using HCV core Ag test
 - 2000 samples sent to Lugar Center monthly
 - 5-10 days turn-around time

Treatment providers



Hepatitis C Elimination Program Care Cascade

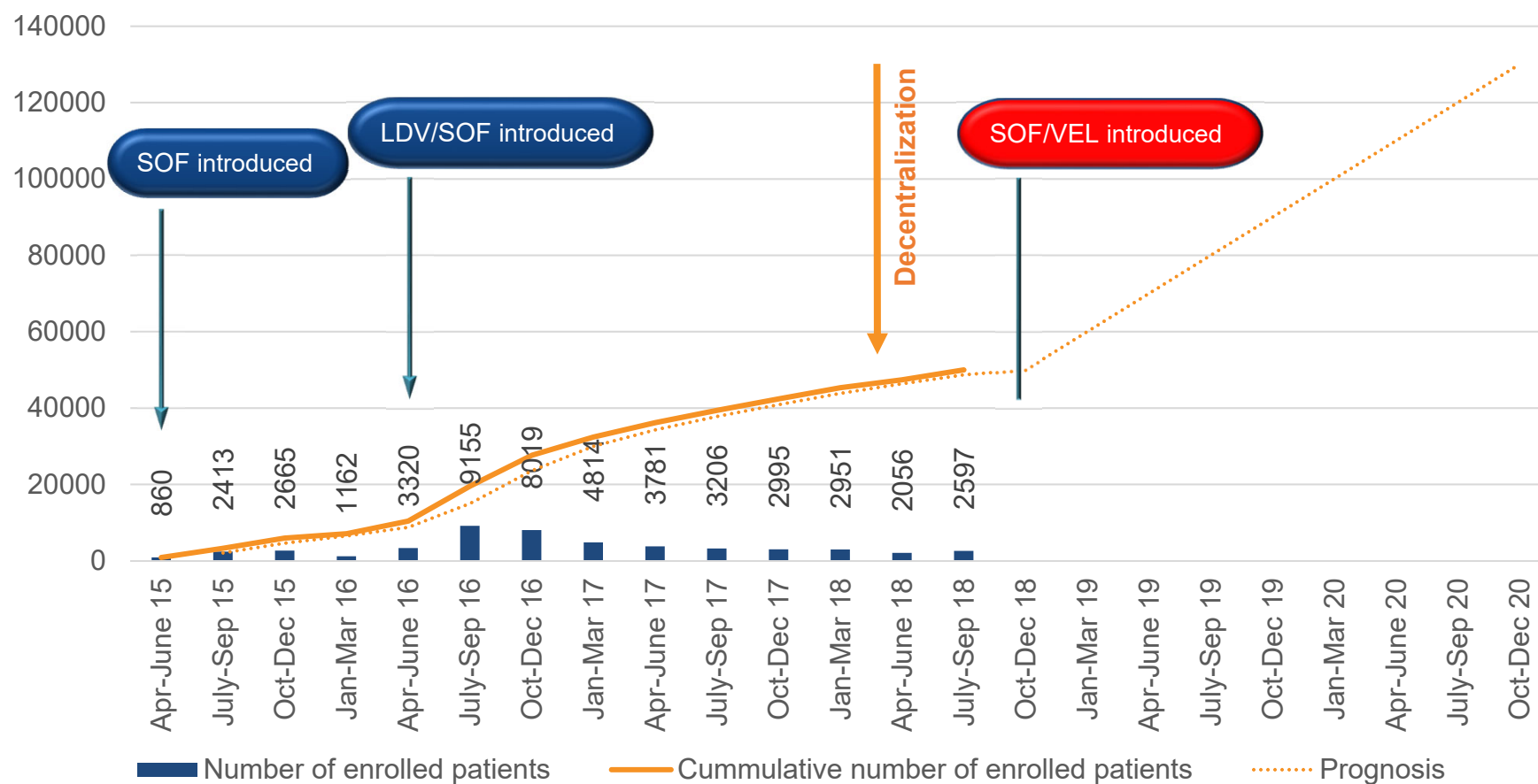
April 28, 2015 – October 31, 2018



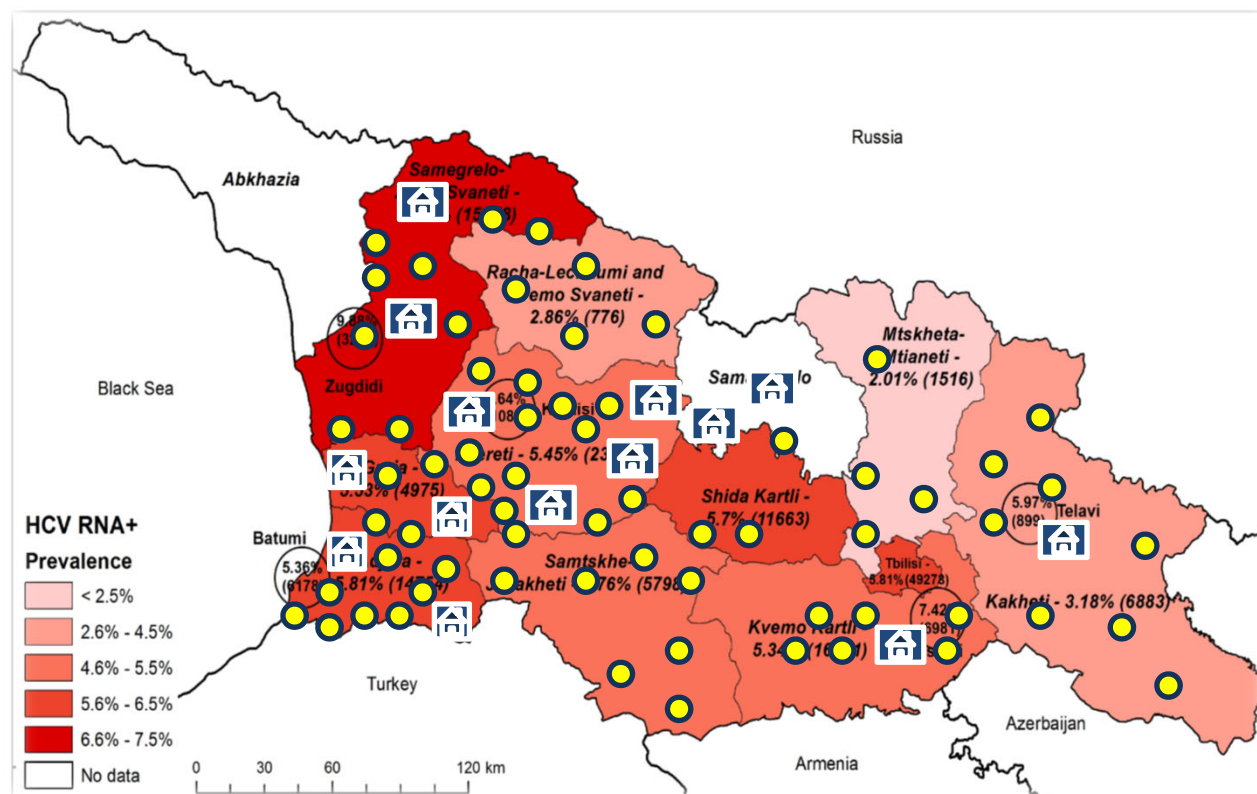
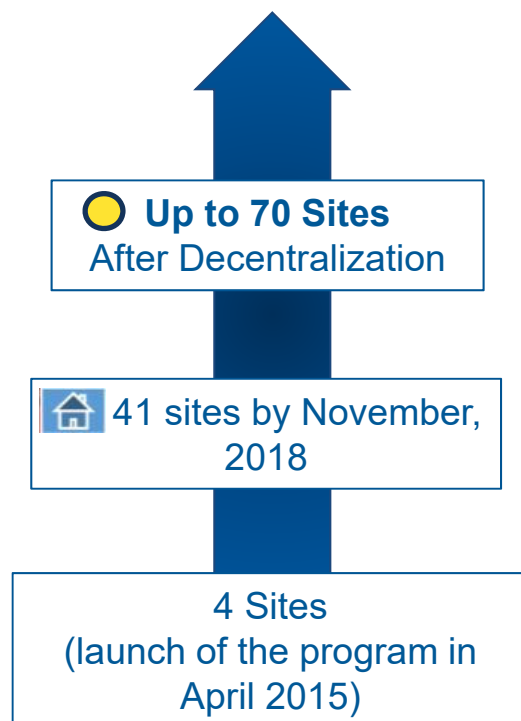
* Among adults with PID screened from January 1, 2015.

Enrollment in the HCV treatment program

Since April 2015, more than 51,000 patients enrolled in the program



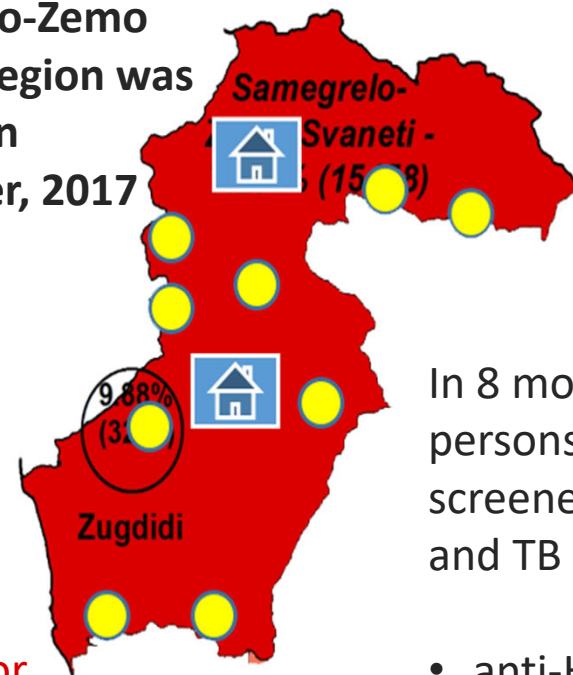
Decentralization concept



Concept: Three Diseases (HIV/HCV/TB) Under One Umbrella

- Integrated TB/HIV/HCV screening protocol approved
- 454 doctors and nurses trained
- Integrated multidisciplinary service monitoring groups established
- Municipal programs supporting pilot implementation approved

Pilot project in
Samegrelo-Zemo
Svaneti Region was
launched in
November, 2017



Target for
screening -
40% of local
population

In 8 months 89,602
persons were
screened on HCV, HIV
and TB among which

- anti-HCV+ 2350 cases
- anti-HIV+ 37 cases
- Presumptive TB 177 cases

Georgia HCV Elimination Clinical Committee



GUIDELINES FOR THE SCREENING, CARE AND TREATMENT OF PERSONS WITH CHRONIC HEPATITIS C INFECTION

UPDATED VERSION
APRIL 2016
GUIDELINES

The American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases and the Infectious Diseases Society of America Present

HCV Guidance: Recommendations for Testing, Managing, and Treating Hepatitis C

Last Updated: April 12, 2017
www.hcvguidelines.org



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შპს "საქართველოს ჯანდაცვის სისტემა"
საერთაშორისო სამედიცინო ცენტრი
საქართველოს ქ. თბილისი, ვ. ბერიძის ქ. 100
ტელ: +995 32 222 22 22

საერთაშორისო სამედიცინო ცენტრი
საქართველოს ქ. თბილისი, ვ. ბერიძის ქ. 100
ტელ: +995 32 222 22 22

C პეპსატიტის მართვა

კლინიკური პრაქტიკის ეროვნული რეკომენდაცია

(გაილაინი)

Important events

- National Hepatitis C Elimination Workshops – 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
- Technical Advisory Group meetings – 2015, 2016, 2017



- EASL side meetings dedicated to Georgian HCV Elimination Program
 - 2014 – London
 - 2015 – Vienna
 - 2016 – Barcelona
 - 2017 – Amsterdam
 - 2018 – Paris
- World Hepatitis Summit
 - 2015 – Glasgow
 - 2017 – Sao Paulo

NOhep Visionaries Programme



- Georgia was awarded the title of NOhep Visionary for the European Region at the World Hepatitis Summit in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on November 1st, 2017.
- Six countries were selected to launch the NOhep Visionaries Programme worldwide:
 - Brazil,
 - Bangladesh,
 - Egypt,
 - Gambia
 - Mongolia, and
 - Georgia



The NOhep Visionaries Programme is a global campaign which engages governments to scale-up successful approaches to elimination and share key learnings, accelerating progress towards eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030.

Conclusion

- HCV Elimination program is a major driver for Health System Strengthening and advancing Public Health Agenda in Georgia, especially for HIV and TB. HCV elimination program supports the development of other key public health programs such as Safe Blood, Infection Control, Harm Reduction, etc.
- In the first 30 months of the HCV Elimination Program, Georgia has scaled up the screening and treatment services achieving impressive results - 41% treatment coverage with 98.2% cure rate
- Enhancing HCV testing and linkage to care and treatment services are critical to reaching the 2020 HCV elimination goals
- Provision of HCV screening, confirmation, care and treatment services at non-specialized settings nearer to patients' homes is critical for achieving the elimination goals
- Decentralization and integration of HCV/HIV/TB services' delivery in primary care or harm reduction settings can result in overcoming barriers to access care and treatment
- Lessons learned from the Georgia elimination program can inform programs in other countries striving to eliminate HCV as a public health threat.

Acknowledgements



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

Ministry of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs



US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



GILEAD

Gilead Sciences, Inc.



World Health
Organization

WHO, WHO Euro

HCV Elimination Program provider facilities

TAG Members



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ECHO

World Hepatitis
Alliance

World Hepatitis Alliance



NOhep

Nohep Movement



National Center for Disease Control and Public Health