

REPORT

OVERSIGHT VISIT REPORT FROM OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE - CCM ALBANIA

Place visit: PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTORY, VLORA

Oversight visit to the Public Health Department of Vlora city

Date of visit: March 10, 2017

Members of the CCM Supervisory Committee:

Marjeta Dervishi

Olimbi Hoxhaj

Skender Fifo

Responsible for Planning and Reporting; Skender Fifo

The present DSD staff in Vlora; Agron Bashllari, Epidemiologist at this Regional Directorate

RAISED ISSUES:

1. Kits and reagents

At the premises of PHD of Vlora there was a HIV testing center. From the present staff we were informed that in this Regional Directorate of Public Health was a special representative who coordinated activities, collaborations and partnerships with the VCT Center for HIV in Vlora.

There was also cooperation with two consultants of the mother and child of the City of Vlora in the awareness for pregnant women HIV testing as well as on providing HIV testing in this target group. Consultants belonged to two different areas of the Vlora city and were implementing in the framework of a pilot intervention of Vlore's PHD.

In this PHD at the testing center were also offered Hepatitis and Syphilis testing, and reported positive Hepatitis cases among pregnant women, which were directed there as part of the follow-up protocol during pregnancy.

With regard to the provision of the HIV rapid tests, were informed that is part of a special item in the budget of the Directorate, which also provided them with the right quantity. From the Directorate staff it was reported that the Vlora Regional Hospital lacked the Microbiology Laboratory, creating great hardships in service coverage.

The conditions and facilities were good and comfortable offering hospitality to citizens who were headed for services raised by the PHD of Vlora city.

In co-operation with the Methadone Maintenance Therapy Center as well as the Vatra Center, a special field focused on trafficked girls and women was carried out joint activities in the field of awareness and information and rapid HIV testing. At the same time, awareness and information activities were carried out with the Vlora University' "Ismail Qemali".

It also reported activities and cooperation with the " Auleda " Center that has been providing services for more than two years and addressed issues of Sexual and Reproductive Health in this area.

Also there were people who conducted documentary testing for the Embassy, as well as documented testing for the new recruits of the Armed Forces.

In the district of Vlora, it was reported that a comprehensive partnership of local partnerships was developed that tackled social problems and public health issues.

In the municipality of Llakatund / Novosela with Roma-focused Roma population have established contacts and develop awareness-raising and information sessions, but testing among them is still at low levels.

Equipment Issues & I & E Materials:

The PHD staff in Vlora had a wide activity in the field of promotion and awareness. What is noticed in this survey is awareness raising and promotion in particular for city schools, health centers in the surrounding communes, as well as in testing for pregnant women as a result of awareness campaigns, while some of them had planned Volunteering for HIV testing.

Since 2012, no information and education material has been available for this PHD. On the part of the IPH with the completion of the implementation of the Global Fund Project and its financial support no information or promotional material was made available to this center even though the requests were ongoing

The procurement procedure for the rapid testing kit for HIV is the same as all the other medical equipment of the Microbiology Laboratory operating at this regional directorate.

Inclusion and partnerships

Vlore's PHD staffs according to the information provided were very well involved in activities between the Public Health Directorate of Vlora' University and had very good relations, communication and cooperation with these institutions.

The Center also had contacts with the community of HIV positive people from this city and worked individually with them mainly in the provision of psychological support. Also mentioned were the problematic cases due to the disclosure of HIV positive status in a child case and that of a family from the Egyptian community in a rural area of this district. In co-operation with the local government structures and responsible institutions they coordinated efforts to provide optimal solutions to the problems related to the attendance of educational institutions as well as problems of stigma and discrimination.

They had very good cooperation in areas of awareness, information and visibility in promoting their work in local media, including local radio and television.

Problems Identified and issues for discussion

Lack of information and education materials,

Lack of cooperation with the VCT Center in Vlora,

Legislation revision on reducing the age of voluntary testing for young people aged 18 to 16, as referral from contacts with high school psychologists, as age is a huge barrier for young people to be offered for testing. According to Albanian legislation, young people under the age of 18 should be accompanied by parents or legal guardians in order to benefit from voluntary counseling and counseling services for HIV and other STIs.

Looking opportunities for access to their interventions and activities in the pretrial detention facility because in Vlora this service is provided by NGOs contracted from the General Directorate of Prisons and not by DPH of Vlora cities.

NGOs have obtained exclusivity and DPH staffs are not allowed to provide voluntary counseling and testing services for this category.

Provide testing for healthcare staff at least one per year as the rapid tests for this category are lacking.

Situation with volunteer testing remains problematic due to lack of funding.