

## **REPORT**

Supervisory visit to the Public Health Directorate in Shkoder city

Date of visit: May 26, 2017

Members of the CCM Oversight Committee:

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The present PHD staff in Shkoder; Artan Mesi, specialist at this Regional Directorate

### **RAISED ISSUES:**

#### **1. Kits and reagents**

At the premises of PHD of Shkoder there were two testing centers for HIV, a VCT rapid test at the Public Health Department and a VCT testing center at the Epidemiology Laboratory. From the staff was informed that in this Regional Directory during the years 94-95 were offered HIV tests with ELISA but now is no longer available.

In this PHD, both VCT testing centers were offered Hepatitis and Syphilis testing as well, and reported positive Hepatitis cases in pregnant women who were referred to as part of the follow-up protocol during pregnancy.

In addition to the provision of the HIV kits, were informed that they were a special item in the budget of the Directorate that also provided them with the right amount.

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

Regarding tuberculosis testing, there were regular follow-up and documentation. There have been reported 1-3 new cases per month with Tuberculosis. Also in 2016, from the district of Shkoder, 10 new cases of HIV diagnosed as HIV positive and 2 new cases reported in 2017 referred to the Public Health Institute of the Reference Laboratory for final HIV Diagnosis.

According to the information received, were reported problems related to the communication with the HIV VCT Center in this prefecture.

According to them, the staff providing services in this center has not been selected according to the required criteria and there is a lack of professionalism. There are subjective choices and their recruitment with a political background, affecting their image and damage it. It was suggested that the staff of the VCT Center in Shkoder be reclassified before starting to rely on funds and projects.

Regarding HIV testing for pregnant women, were informed that they had information about a large number of this target group targeting HIV testing at the VCT center within the support provided by a UNDP project focusing on awareness. A great job was made on providing information and providing testing for all pregnant women directed at the VCT Center in Shkoder. Although from the Regional Directorate of Public Health in Shkoder had been requested by the project donors to be their implementers or even as a co-worker in implementation, but their request was not taken in consideration. Also there were persons who conducted documentary testing for the Embassy, as well as documented testing for the new recruits of the Armed Forces.

### **Equipment Issues & I & E Materials:**

PHD staff in Shkoder had a wide-ranging 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 of 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 made available to 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 HIV testing kit is the same with all other medical equipment of the Microbiology Laboratory.

### **Inclusion and partnerships**

Shkoder VCT staff, according to the information provided, was very well involved in the activities between the Directorate of Public Health Shkoder, Faculty of Nursing, and University of Shkoder 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. The problem remained their involvement in activities due to 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**

Lack of information materials

Lack of cooperation with VCT Center in Shkoder