

Minutes
of
Policy and Advocacy Advisory Council Meeting: 3

The PAAC meeting was held at the NCDCPH on June 27, 2016 at 16:30.

Objectives:

Update on transition plan development.

Attendees:

Nino Berdzuli – Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs
Tamar Gabunia - CCM Vice-Chair
Tsovinar Sakanyan – The Global Fund, Fund Portfolio Manager
Ekaterine Kavtaradze – National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), Deputy Director
Konstantine Labartkava – GeNPUD, “New Vector
Ina Inaridze – MdM
Natalia Zakareishvili – United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA), Program Analyst
Dali Usharidze – NGO New Way
Tamar Kashbadze - Ministry of Corrections of Georgia, Medical Department, Regulatory Division, Chief Specialist
Eliso Bichashvili - Ministry of Corrections of Georgia, Medical Department, Chief Specialist
Paata Sabelashvili – European Harm Reduction Network (EHRN) consultant
Medea khmelidze – Georgia Harm Reduction Network (GHRN)
Ketevan Stvilia – NCDC, PIU, HIV Program Manager
Giorgi Soselia – NCDC PIU, HIV M&E
Nino Badridze – AIDS Center, Head of Epidemiological Department
Tea Jibuti – Curatio International Foundation (CIF), TB expert
Ana Zhulina – CIF, Project Coordinator
Ketevan Chkhatarashvili – CIF, President
Irina Grdzeldze – CCM, Executive Secretary
Natia Khonelide – CCM, Administrative Assistant
Maka Danelia – PAAC, Policy and Advocacy Specialist

The meeting was opened by Chairperson Dr. Nino Berdzuli who welcomed the attendees and presented the meeting objectives.

As part of welcome speech Dr. Tsovinar Sakanyan attracted participants attention to Global Fund plans in the region, importance of transition plan and GF intention to closely monitor and support transition process in order to ensure sustainability of TB and HIV programs.

Dr. Tamar Gabunia presented the newly appointed policy and advocacy specialist to the Council and gave an overview of PAAC establishment, its objectives, composition,

leadership, mandate, relationships between PAAC and CCM as well as challenges and needs of transition planning, including the process and planned outputs.

Dr. Ketevan Chkhatarashvili described the methodology of transition plan development and the main milestones. She mentioned that the first phase is completed yielding the planned outputs. The next steps, timeframe and planned outputs for second and third phases were overviewed in details. The focus was made on the importance of identifying the responsible organization and ensuring policy decisions enabling implementation of the transition plan.

Dr. Tsovinar Sakanyan mentioned the importance of having a well thought transition plan and inquired if the technical team considers the timeframe realistic.

Dr. Chkhatarashvili assured the participants that the plan will be elaborated as planned, however due to rapid changes in the environment there will be a need to revise the transition plan by the end of 2017.

Dr. Nino Berdzuli mentioned that the country has developed corresponding strategies and many developments are underway, thus the need to revise TP periodically is understandable. It is critical to develop a realistic and feasible plan.

The group discussed the civil society involvement as one of the challenging issues.

Dr. Sakanyan – GF is interested to see the initial steps of transition, for instance a pilot of NGO involvement under state funding, such a pilot may reveal the need in reprogramming and further support of transition to ensure sustainability after 2020.

Mr. Paata Sabelashvili pointed considering the country's intention to eliminate HepC by 2020 the state funded preventive activities within the harm reduction program are already deficient and not sufficient to reach Hep C NSP targets. There is a need to remodel and scale up services. Besides, there is a threat of biased decision-making due to stigma.

Dr. Ketevan Chkhatarashvili – challenges of NGO involvement are not limited to the availability of government funding, these organizations have to be strong enough and have adequate organizational capacity to meet the state procurement requirements.

Dr. Tsovinar Sakanyan suggested to explore the opportunity of merging resources with other priority state programs such as hepatitis C that require the same infrastructure for preventive activities as HIV.

Dr. Ekaterine Kavtaradze described the current arrangement of prevention co-funding shared by the GF and the state and pointed that the government in essence planned to use the infrastructure developed and supported by GF.

Dr. Ketil Stvilia suggested acceleration of thematic group discussion on certain issues, for instance Opioid Substitution Therapy as transition for this component is planned from 2017.

Dr. Chkhatarashvili pointed that OST transition should be completed before Transition Plan is finalized.

Dr. Tamar Gabunia underlined that the key steps related to OST integration into the state budget are already outlined into the National HIV strategy. A group of responsible individuals from relevant authorities should consider working directly with the MoLHSA department of health for facilitating necessary programmatic changes.

. The idea was supported by Dr. Berdzuli who expressed readiness to work on OST transition with all interested parties.

Dr. Tamar Gabunia concluded that as the TP outline has been endorsed by the CCM, in depth discussion with PAAC members and other experts in a small group format on specific topics should be initiated to elaborating best solutions to challenges identified into the TP outline.

Dr. Nino Berdzuli summarized the meeting and thanked the participants.

Decision points:

PAAC will continue working on the transition plan according to the outline endorsed at 83rd CCM meeting

PAAC PAS in coordination with CIF expert will facilitate the working process for thematic discussions on selected topic

Minutes prepared by Maka Danelia

Policy and Advocacy Specialist, PAAC