



NEWSLETTER

MEDICAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

UKRAINIAN-SWISS PROJECT

April-June
2020

online course

for medical professionals on the YouTube channel



Medical education development

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Tue, Fri at 5 pm since May 5

Season 2

you can learn here: www.phc.or.ua

e-certificate is available



PUBLIC
HEALTH
CENTER

RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC CHALLENGES:

experience of development of the online course
“Medical Assistance During the COVID-19
Pandemic” (2 seasons)

The worldwide pandemic of SARS-COV-2 put a lot of challenges in front of health care systems which require joint efforts of medical facilities, professional medical associations, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations, state authorities and international technical assistance projects, of every single medical doctor, nurse, health care manager. The speed of response, quality of communication and evidence of measures taken determine the extent to which a country is able to control the spread of the virus and the level of negative consequences caused by the pandemic.

Understanding the importance of reliable information during the period of COVID-19 uncertainty for health care professionals, including family doctors, nurses, and also the importance of accessibility of this information for as many practitioners as possible, the Project established the partnership that enabled creation of two seasons of the online course “Medical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic”, in which around 8,000 medical professionals participated.

The course was created under the supervision of the National Health

Service of Ukraine with active involvement of the Public Health Center of Ukraine. Both partners ensured communication support, and the Public Health Center of Ukraine (PHC) also provided its educational platform to place two seasons of the course: <https://portal.phc.org.ua>. As it was possible to share the course not only via the Project YouTube channel, but also via the PHC official educational portal, it ensured wider coverage of participants, and also simplified the algorithm of learning and receiving a CPD certificate.



**Natalia
Riabtseva,**

Deputy Head of the
National Health Service
of Ukraine

The Ukrainian-Swiss project and the National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU) already have a positive experience of collaboration: in 2019, the NHSU Academy Camp was held with the support of the Project, the online course for managers is also being jointly developed. What, in your opinion, are the areas for collaboration of the NHSU and the Project during the COVID-19 pandemic? Why has the NHSU supported the idea of the online course development?

The pandemic has become a cross-cutting theme for most areas. At the same time, the Project and the NHSU have joined efforts to disseminate new knowledge to combat the pandemic. As the NHSU has contracted medical facilities to provide care for COVID-19 within the Program of Medical Guarantees, it is important for us that the managers and medical staff of these facilities used modern and evidence-based practices in their work for the safety of both patients and medical staff. In the context of pandemic and in general for knowledge dissemination among a wide range of professionals, online courses are one of the best solutions; this observation is supported by the experience of the NHSU Academy. Therefore, the common goal, relevance of the topic, and technical solution have become the basis for our cooperation.

What "pre-pandemic" achievements help you to counteract the spread of COVID-19 in Ukraine (in the area of responsibility of the NHSU)?

From the very beginning, the Ukrainian-Swiss project and the Public Health Center of Ukraine have aimed to collaborate, especially given the availability of a user-friendly educational platform of the Public Health Center. What, in your opinion, are the areas of collaboration of the Center and the Project?

Conceptually, the Center and the Project are primarily connected by the willingness to scale up the best expertise in medical and public health education. The key belief for us is that knowledge and experience are not just the achievement of an individual, they should become the property of the professional community at the national level.

We see our joint efforts as an investment in the professional development of clinical and public health professionals. These efforts are one of the prerequisites for the effective functioning of the education system, training, development, and evaluation of health workers.

The experience of other countries shows that health care systems with a single health care payer are much more effective in responding to various challenges, including the fight against epidemics. The previous experience of the National Health Service of Ukraine - contracting within the Program of Medical Guarantees, transparency and sharing the available data, implementation of educational programs, data-based analytics, maintaining perpetual communication with providers - allowed responding to the situation as quickly as possible. In particular, the NHSU launched several tracks of communication on the topic of COVID-19, implemented chatbots, in a short time (in a few days) contracted the network for COVID-19 packages and started paying to the providers.

What are your future plans? And how, in general, is educational area in the NHSU is planned under the COVID-19 situation, political turbulence, and a current state of health care reform?

It is important for us to combine proper support of operational work (first of all, timely payments to health care facilities and pharmacies) and further development. When we discuss the development, it includes suggestions to the Program of Medical Guarantees for 2021 which should be included in the draft state budget in summer, preparation to the transfer of insulin reimbursement to the Program of Medical Guarantees; it also includes further development of the e-health system which will last more than one year, as well as launch of new educational initiatives of the NHSU Academy. Of course, the pandemic made its adjustments to the Academy's plans; in particular, we have created an additional section on the platform which we fill with relevant materials for physicians and managers. At the same time, we continue to prepare several initiatives for managers (including with the Project), for the primary health care (for example, on the management of insulin-dependent patients), add materials on electronic medical records, and provide feedback on the DRG course. We see a huge demand for new knowledge that does not really depend on political change - and it is inspiring!



**Mykhaylo
Ryabinchuk,**

Head of the Department
for Coordination of
Educational Programs, the
Public Health Center of
Ukraine

What joint initiatives could we launch to give health care workers more possibilities to develop professionally? What new formats will be most relevant in the next six months, a year?

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This year we plan to release at least 5 new distance learning courses. Some of them will be devoted to laboratory diagnostics, there will be large general subject courses on public health.

First of all, you can see how in the past three months the line between traditional learning and online courses has finally blurred. Until recently, distance education was often positioned as an «alternative» to conventional education programs, but now it is clear that this is not the case. Online courses are a powerful tool for modernizing the content of education, an opportunity to constantly nourish and update it. We would like online courses on the Public Health Center platform to become such a tool, to be more deeply integrated into the educational process.

Of course, this significantly increases the requirements to the content of online courses and distance learning platforms. Under the pandemic situation, many educational institutions have built processes literally «just-in-time», now it is necessary to structure and systematize them, to generalize the experience. The expertise we have can be very relevant for this.

Strategically, mixed forms of education will be most effective. We see the prospect in online courses of general subject which would explain the disciplines in adequate and understandable language, be visually attractive, including a serious methodological refinement of materials. They can become a logical component of medical education in Ukraine and be interesting and useful as a self-sufficient educational product even for a wider public.

The second important format is small concentrated on-demand courses organized in short training cycles. As the experience of cooperation between the Center and the Project has shown, prompt response to the requests of the professional community in emergencies is extremely important. In our opinion, this format will work in a broader context.

Responding to the new challenges posed by the spread of COVID-19, what (in your opinion) are the most important lessons learnt and applicable in the future for Ukraine (for the Centre)?

The most important lesson is that you need to prepare and consider opportunities in advance. Regarding our work, we are talking about institutional capacity, human resources, education and training system. We did a lot of things

intuitively, but the pandemic showed that rapid scaling, the ability to respond flexibly to the needs, and availability of different learning and communication tools are key factors in responding effectively, at least in terms of competency development. We have had such an opportunity, so the prompt release of relevant training materials in various forms has not been a problem.

What “pre-pandemic” achievements help to counteract the spread of COVID-19 in Ukraine?

We can only describe here how we, for our part, have joined the efforts to counteract the spread of COVID-19. The Public Health Center has had a fully-fledged, experienced team to coordinate educational programs, so we have been able to quickly adapt and release training materials according to the latest WHO guidelines. Thanks to the status of one of the most powerful providers of online education for physicians, we have been able to collaborate with Ukrainian experts. They have significantly expanded and deepened the content of the available courses.

The design of the system of continuing professional development has played an important role in attracting and motivating physicians. It is still not perfect, but the organization of training in such a way contributes to a more flexible implementation of new educational programs.

What are your plans? And, in general, how is the planning of the educational area of the Public Health Centre organized under the pandemic?

This year we plan to release at least 5 new distance learning courses. Some of them will be devoted to laboratory diagnostics, there will be large general subject courses on public health. We also plan to work more closely with higher education institutions and other educational institutions to update the content of education and develop educational materials.

In general, the pandemic has only partially affected the principle of educational planning. Three main sources of information for planning remain as follows: communication with the professional community, the needs of the program departments that implement the strategic objectives of the Public Health Center, and feedback from courses' participants.

The main thing that the pandemic showed is how critical the careful attitude to the needs of physicians is. Simultaneous overload with irrelevant information, a certain lack of information and uncertainty impose a huge responsibility on us. We must act as a kind of a pillar, one of the key points of professional communication.

We want to further expand the target audience, modify approaches to development of educational content and, if necessary, update existing materials. There are opportunities for this, and we are constantly looking for new options for cooperation with stakeholders.

THE CONTENT OF THE COURSE

The content of the course was formed by practicing doctors, representatives of medical professional associations and professional teachers of clinical disciplines.

The key partner which initiated the first season of the course and was responsible for the clinical part of the first season was the Academy of Family Medicine of Ukraine with the support of the Ukrainian Academy of Paediatric Specialties and All-Ukrainian Association of Children's Immunodeficiencies. Combination of the unique and diverse expertise allowed taking into consideration different aspects related to medical assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic: usage of personal protective equipment (PPE), infection control, counselling

via phone and supervision of newborns, assistance to patients with panic attacks, vaccination during the pandemic, supervision of patients with immunodeficiencies, lung and cardio-vascular diseases.

One of the biggest private medical network in Ukraine Dobrobut and also the Public Health Center became the second season partners. Having their own experience of treating patients with COVID-19, professionals of Dobrobut were able to present recommendations on outpatient and inpatient treatment of COVID-19

to ensure proper work of polyclinic department and patient supervision, it was also demonstrated how to use a ventilator. Jointly with the professionals of the Public Health Center they presented topics of laboratory diagnostics, following requirements of infection control and practice of using PPE.

All the presented information was based on the international guidelines of leading professional institutions, including World Health Organization (WHO), Center for Diseases Control (CDC), etc.



Oleksiy Rykov,

Medical Director of
Paediatrics, Dobrobut
Medical Network

What motivated you and your facility to participate in the online course "Medical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Season 2"?

First of all, we have sufficient experience of organizing infection control activities during the pandemic at the high level as well as the experience of providing inpatient and outpatient care for patients with COVID-19. It is no exaggeration to say that many of our activities and implementations were ahead of similar decisions made by the government. That is why social responsibility and desire to support medicine and health care in Ukraine motivated us to share our experience and knowledge.

If we see the COVID-19 pandemic as a challenge, what new opportunities have you been able to find for yourself at this time?

Both systematization of approaches to infection control and establishment of an infection control structure. Also, systematization of educational processes and decision making under limited time and resources.

Was the teaching experience in the online course new for you? Can you share your impression or previous experience?

This experience is not new, I have a lot of experience teaching offline and online. But organization of the course "Medical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic" was done at a very high level in comparison with other online events in which I participated as a speaker or trainee.

How do you plan your CPD? What can you recommend to health care professionals?

We create CPD ourselves. We recommend to follow Dobrobut and its partners' announcements so not to miss a lot of interesting content.



**Iryna
Voloshyna,**

PhD MD, Board Member
of the Academy of Family
Medicine of Ukraine

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The key secret of creating a team of powerful speakers is friendly communication, respect that was formed during previous joint educational events

You are one of the leaders of the AFMU. You suggested organizing the online course “Medical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic». Which previous achievements of the Academy allowed bringing together a team of powerful speakers so quickly and implementing the course just in one week since the idea?

The key secret of creating a team of powerful speakers is friendly communication, respect that was formed during previous joint educational events – Azov Family Doctor School, PrimePediatrics, Duodecim protocol translation, etc., and also effective communication in the social networks, reviewing clinical cases, including in the groups “Family Doctor Notebook”, “Vaccination: Questions and Answers”, which in total have over 100,000 subscribers.

Even though we are in different cities and oblasts of Ukraine, ideologically we are close, all of us are supporters of the health care reform, English speaking practicing doctors who regularly improve their knowledge, participate in international projects and are eager to share useful information among colleagues.

Analysing your previous experience of organization and teaching, what difference do you see between offline and online formats of a course?

Of course, an online course differs a lot from an offline event in terms of emotional colouring of both speakers and participants. A lack of eye contact, impossibility to ask questions during the presentation, see the reaction of the audience, communicate with participants during the coffee break – those things make online events “colder” than offline projects. At the same time, online education is a convenient tool for those who can’t travel to other cities to offline conferences. Online education is more cost-effective than offline education, but, at the same time, the scientific level of information stays the same.

From your experience as a family doctor, what changes has COVID-19 brought to CPD of health care providers?

At the moment, online education is the only source of CPD for medical professionals in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and will probably stay as an essential part of education in the future after the pandemic is over. Doctors started to trust online events more, appreciating their convenience and informativeness.

Has the new system of CPD simplified professional development (based on the COVID-19 example)?

On the one hand, digitalization of the CPD system has simplified access to new knowledge and made it possible to obtain new skills, in particular, distance counselling, prescriptions, broadened horizons of communication with foreign colleagues. But acquiring manual practical skills in clinical medicine should be offline, as it is only of applied nature (injection techniques, medical equipment management, surgical invasions).

What impressed you the most in the online course which you created together with partners?

I was impressed by the number of participants (over 7,000 people) and voluntary participation of professionals of different specialties and different education (doctors, nurses, interns, students) in the course, and I am grateful for this.

I got an incredible impression from the experience of coordinated team work of consultants, technical experts, website administrators, copywriters, who worked precisely, with total understanding of their process and respect to the colleagues. I would love to repeat this experience in the future.

How do you plan further professional activities?

Of course, there are professional plans related to the development of independent medical communities, in particular, the Academy of Family Medicine of Ukraine, and my colleagues work a lot in this direction. The closest plans are to organize online congress on family medicine ProFamily (August 15-16, 2020) with our partner Progress NGO and the Ukrainian Academy of Paediatric Specialties. We also hope to conduct our traditional Azov School of Family Doctor this autumn.

The number of participants of the online course was unexpectedly (for the organizers) high. Due to the course availability on the Public Health Center portal **7,988 doctors, nurses, teachers, and students** of HEIs registered for the course. 2,883 participants finished the first season of the course, which included 8 sessions and a test after each session, and received a CPD certificate. The second season had a similar structure, and 657 participants were able to graduate and get a certificate.

In general, the number of views of the lectures on the Project YouTube channel reached 63,364. Both seasons of the course continue to enrol participants till now, so everyone can watch lectures, answer test questions, and get an electronic certificate till 1 August: <https://portal.phc.org.ua>.

Despite the fact that the course format includes only lectures, the course organizers collected the frequently asked questions from health care specialists regarding managing patients with COVID-19

using an online form. In general, over 1,000 questions were received. Speakers were able to analyse these questions and provide answers to the most relevant ones.

The feedback from the course participants proves that the online course was timely, useful, and efficient. Medical specialists were able to use the practical information in their professional activities. And the Project and its partners got a portion of inspiration to plan the next educational courses and programs.



Liudmyla Zvir,

General Practitioner-
Family Doctor,
Lviv oblast

What are your impressions from the course "Medical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic"? How did you learn about the course?

I learned about the course on the Facebook page of the Public Health Center of Ukraine. And I have positive impressions from the course. There is some information which is repeated, but it is needed as some knowledge is erased with the time. High level of speakers. The most informative, in my opinion, were the lectures of doctors from Dobrobut – concise and practical.

Name three things which you remember the most. What is the difference between online and offline learning, in your opinion? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

The most important topics for me were organization of the work of a medical facility under the pandemic, tactics of ambulatory supervision of patients with COVID-19,

diagnostic and clinical tactics in specific cases. Online learning is more convenient for me, as due to work and home-related activities I can freely choose the time for listening to lectures. But I just miss direct communication with a speaker, possibility to ask questions which appear during the presentation.

Which information from the course helped you in practice?

Diagnostic and clinical criteria. They concern both my patients and their contact people.

Was the online course "Medical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic" timely? In your opinion, was the information reliable?

The course was timely and reliable, what is very important in this situation.

What would you recommend to add to the course or to take into consideration for other courses?

For the future it is worth adding a feedback option not only during live streaming.



Karyna Svydlo,

Nurse,
Zaporizhzhia oblast

What are your impressions from the course? How did you learn about the course?

I learned about the course on the website of the PHC. I was already registered there and studied some courses. This course was timely. The structure of the course is logical, and the key message is delivered.

Name three things which you remember the most. What is the difference between online and offline learning? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

I can't define only three things I remember, as I got the whole picture of behaviour in this or that situation, working with patients. From the course I know how to put on and take off PPE, how to calm a patient down, to which complaints of a patient we should pay attention ("red flags"), how to organize

routine vaccination, etc.

Under pandemic it is not so important how we get information, but it is important that this information is reliable, timely and useful. The Internet and online course made useful knowledge available. The PHC website always provides reliable information. Online courses are convenient.

Which information from the course helped you in practice?

I use information from the course every day, I remember the recommendations of Fedir Lapiy on vaccination during the pandemic, which we introduced into our practice.

Was the online course timely? In your opinion, was the information reliable?

The course "Medical Assistance During the COVID-19 pandemic" was timely and useful.

What would you recommend to add to the course or to take into consideration for other courses?

This course and all other courses are development, primarily, for doctors. I take them only because there is no alternative, and I need to learn. If I don't increase my level of knowledge, I will professionally regress. The Ministry of Health thinks there are only doctors in medicine, and they should know and be able to manage everything themselves. In practice, everything is different. Nurses also need accessible courses.



Kateryna Kaplinska,

General Practitioner-
Family Doctor, Cherkasy
oblast

What are your impressions from the course "Medical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic"? How did you learn about the course?

I have only positive impressions. This course helped to build a logical and structured chain of actions during the pandemic. I learned about it on Facebook.

Name three things which you remember the most. What is the difference between online and offline learning, in your opinion? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

The things I remember the most: communication skills via phone, psychological support

and vaccination during the pandemic, skills of putting PPE on. Online learning has its advantage that we can be at home or at work and study, and also that some courses can be re-watched during some time after they are finished. The disadvantage is that there is no live communication.

Which information from the course helped you in practice?

The most helpful was information about psychological support. I was able to calm down a lot of patients and to differentiate real symptoms of COVID-19 from imagined ones during the phone calls and visits.

Was the online course "Medical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic" timely? In your opinion, was the information reliable?

Yes, it was very timely. And the information was reliable, useful.

What would you recommend to add to the course or to take into consideration for other courses?

I liked this course a lot, that is why can't suggest anything in particular. But maybe it is worth adding a part on legal protection of doctors during the pandemic (so that there were clear borders what is allowed to do and what is not, so not to get into trouble).



Olena Lemeshko,

General Practitioner-
Family Doctor,
Dnipropetrovsk oblast

What are your impressions from the course? How did you learn about the course?

The first season is excellent, breathtaking, relevant, and convenient. In general, impressions are positive, I recommend this course to my colleagues.

Name three things which you remember the most. What is the difference between online and offline learning, in your opinion? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Phone counselling, work with anxiety and panic attacks – these topics are excellent. Vaccination during the pandemic. In general, the first season is superb. I have been learning online since 2017. The advantages of online learning are accessibility and time convenience. I like the format of

presenting material when there are slides/guidelines, and after this material there is a test. And the disadvantages of online learning are that you can't see colleagues, there is a lack of networking.

Which information from the course helped you in practice?

Panic attacks - there are a lot of examples. Vaccination - there has been no decrease in vaccination coverage during the quarantine. Telephone counselling – 90% of visits in March-April were via telemedicine. Patronage of new-borns – I waited until I graduated to do the patronage.

Was the online course timely? In your opinion, was the information reliable?

The course was very timely. The information was reliable. I liked that the information was provided for "here and now". And it was highlighted that it wasn't self-evident and the information can change.

What would you recommend to add to the course, or to take into consideration for other courses?

The course is excellent. I would change, but it is my way of perceiving information: I like the format of presenting material when there are slides/guidelines, and after this material there is a test. I haven't watched TV series since Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers, but during the first season I left all thing aside and was waiting for the start. And after I missed this!

CONCLUSIONS

We are happy that we were able to create a timely and useful course for medical professionals in Ukraine under serious challenges which health care system is facing. But, at the same time, we appreciate those conclusions we made during organization and provision of this educational product:

- We should start preparation for challenges in advance. Definitely, we can't predict everything, but, even now, creating educational platforms, programs, products, we should consider how they can be adapted to new formats, higher and specific demand.

- Partnership and strong teams are very important aspects of success. The ability to unite efforts, expertise, and available resources allows developing effective events as a response to the pandemic, which, at the same time, are cost-effective and sustainable.
- Health care system is a complex mechanism which consists of professionals of different specialties. When we create educational products, we should consider requests, levels of responsibilities, possibilities of different categories of professionals, so everyone can grow professionally and strengthen capacities of the system in general.

acknowledgment

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We are open for ideas, suggestions, inspiring and transparent partnership for the development of Ukraine, medical education, and primary health care in Ukraine.