

National Conference on Innovative Community Based Services for People Living with HIV and AIDS

Palace of Serbia | Belgrade | December 1, 2017

The National Conference on Innovative Community Based Services for People Living with HIV and AIDS is an activity that is being carried out during this year's World AIDS Day celebration in our country and is one of the most important events in this field in Serbia. The conference will address the activities of both civil and government sectors in response to the HIV epidemic, especially when it comes to social care, health care and legal assistance to people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHIV), but also prevention and the possibility of stopping the spread of infection, as well as reducing stigma and discrimination against this population.

The National Conference on Innovative Community Based Services for People Living with HIV and AIDS is also the final activity of two-year project "Towards standardization of community based social service provision for people living with HIV in Serbia", implemented by the Union of Organizations of Serbia dealing with the protection of people living with HIV and AIDS (USOP) with partners - PLHIV associations from Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis, Subotica and Pancevo with the support of other organizations from all over Serbia dealing with similar programs. The project is part of the "European Union Support to an Inclusive Society" program, funded and implemented by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans' Affairs and Social Affairs through the IPA Program (The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance). The project aimed to define procedures and instruments for monitoring the provision of user lead support services for people living with HIV, as well as getting support from decision makers to include this service in the social protection system.

The Law on Social Protection defines social services as activities for providing support and assistance to individuals and families in order to improve or preserve the quality of life, eliminate or mitigate the risk of adverse life circumstances, and create the possibility to live independently in society. The services are the basic means of achieving the goals of social protection. The same law recognizes five groups of services for which the standards are developed or in phase of development. In addition to these, other community-based innovative services have been developed in the community to respond to a wide range of people's needs. One of the innovative services is peer support service for people living with HIV and AIDS offered by activists living with HIV and AIDS.



„Towards standardization of community based social services provision for people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHIV) in Serbia”

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Objectives of the National Conference on Innovative Community Based Services for People Living with HIV and AIDS are:

1. To inform the professional and general public about process of redesign community services for people living with HIV and AIDS, and the real needs and the situation of people living with HIV and AIDS in Serbia;
2. To present a proposal of standards, procedures and instruments for monitoring and evaluating this innovative community service for people living with HIV and AIDS in Serbia;
3. To consider the current and potential challenges faced by innovative community service providers at this stage of social protection system development;
4. To get support the expert public and decision makers to continue the process of improving community service for people living with HIV and AIDS;
5. To find possibilities for improving the treatment and legal protection of HIV positive persons in order to stop the infection (positive prevention) and reduce stigma and discrimination through partner but also independent activities of the civil and government sector;
6. To share the experiences with others in this field from other countries.

Participants of the National Conference on Innovative Community Based Services for People Living with HIV and AIDS are:

- ✓ Decision makers, policy makers and representatives of institutions in the social, health and human rights protection system;
- ✓ Providers and community service users, in particular organizations of people living with HIV and AIDS; Representatives of civil society organizations that provide assistance and support to marginalized groups, especially people living with HIV and AIDS;
- ✓ Representatives of international organizations and funds;
- ✓ Representatives of the academic community;
- ✓ Media representatives.



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PROGRAM OF THE CONFERENCE

(Moderator: **Sanja Nikolin**, Women's platform for development of Serbia)

09:30 AM – 10:00 AM	Arrival and registratio of participants
10:00 AM – 10:40 AM	<p>Welcome and Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Mr. Vladimir Antic, Executive Director, USOP</p> <p>Mr. Zoran Djordjevic, Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy</p> <p>Ms. Snežana Božović, State Secretary in the Ministry of of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy</p> <p>Mr. Ferenc Vicko, State Secretary in the Ministry of Health</p> <p>Ms. Snezana Klasnja, Deputy of Ministry of Youth and Sports</p> <p>Mr. Aleksandar Bojovic, World Health Organization, Public Health Officer in Serbia</p>
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Press conference and Coffee break
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	<p>1st Plenary Session “Towards standardization of community based social services provision for people living with HIV in Serbia”</p> <p>About the project Towards standardization of community based social services provision for people living with HIV in Serbia – Violeta Andjelkovic, USOP</p> <p>Chances and challenges in creating innovative, community based social services for people living with HIV and AIDS – Slavica Milojevic, Republic Institute for Social Protection</p> <p>The needs to be answered by peer counseling service – Sladjana Baros, JAZAS</p> <p>Providing peer support service for PLHIV in Serbia – Boris Kovacic, Association “Stav +”, Subotica</p> <p>Experiences in standardization community based social services for PLHIV in Montengero – Vladan Golubovic, Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCM) & CAZAS, Podgorica</p> <p>Discussion</p>
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM	Coffee break



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12:30 PM – 13:30 PM	<p>2nd Plenary Session “Innovative services in the social protection system”</p> <p>Peer support services in the community for PLHIV – Sustainability challenges – Vladan Jovanovic, development of social protection services consultant</p> <p>Assessment of the needs of PLHIV – gap in the past experience and new possibilities – Daliborka Batrnek Antić, City Centre for Social Work Novi Sad</p> <p>Tension between the purpose of the Law on Social Protection and reality of PLHIV - Possible Paths for Innovative Social Services – Zorica Pavlovic, City Centre for Social Affairs Beograd</p> <p>Experience in the development and implementation of innovative services for people with disabilities – Gordana Rajkov, Centre for Independent Living</p> <p>Discutant by invitation (presentation of other experiences):</p> <p>Development of services in cooperation with local self governments in Serbia – Aleksandar Prica, Association „Duga“ Sabac, Serbia</p> <p>Discussion</p>
13:30 PM – 14:30 PM	Lunch break
14:30 PM – 15:30 PM	<p>3rd Plenary Session “How to keep HIV and AIDS on the social-health policy agenda”</p> <p>Serbia's willingness to accept new HIV programs – Natasa Katanic, Ministry of Health of Serbia</p> <p>The most important challenges for the health system for a complete or adept response to HIV – Danijela Maric, Representative of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Novi Sad and Clinical Centre of Vojvodina</p> <p>Obstacles to Full Equality PLHIV – Slobodan Milivojevic, Office Commissioner for the Protection of Equality</p> <p>Why we support the HIV preventive programs and support activities for PLHIV – Milica Todorovic, President of Council for Gender Equality of Assembly of Pancevo</p> <p>Sustainable Financing of National HIV Responses – Nenad Petkovic, UNDP Serbia</p> <p>Experiences: Where are the unused opportunities and resources? – Nevena Ciric, Association "AID +" Belgrade</p> <p>Mapping future from the perspective of service users from Serbia – people living with HIV from Serbia (Djurica, Belgrade and Dragan, Novi Sad)</p> <p>Discussion</p>
15:30 – 16:00	Conclusions and closing of the conference



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HIV situation in Serbia

It is estimated that at this time, one of three people, out of about three thousand people in Serbia living with HIV, does not know his/her HIV positive status. According to data obtained by Serbian Institute for Public Health "Dr. Milan Jovanovic Batut", by the end of 2016, 3480 have been diagnosed as HIV positive, from which 1846 persons have AIDS (53% of all registered HIV-infected persons). From 1985 till now, 1204 people died of AIDS, which is one-third of all people infected with HIV (1,096 people died from AIDS while 108 HIV-infected people died of HIV/AIDS-related illness or conditions). At the end of 2016, 2276 people had been living with HIV in the Republic of Serbia, or there was no reported death to the relevant institutions for these people, although there is a reasonable suspicion that a significant number of persons diagnosed with HIV infection does not go to competent healthcare institutions dealing with HIV treatment for unknown reasons (leaving the country, deceased, personal or other reasons, etc.) According to data from the Republic Health Insurance Fund in Serbia, 1570 people infected with HIV in 2016 were on anti-retroviral therapy (ART). According to the Registry of the City Public Health Institute Belgrade, 1537 people with HIV infection live in the capital of Serbia. According to the Institute of Public Health of Vojvodina, 390 people currently live in the province of Vojvodina, while between 250 and 300 are on ARV therapy.

The Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality emphasizes that the greatest social distance is against people living with HIV/AIDS, and this is shown by their public opinion research, and unfortunately this is prove that high level of HIV stigma is present in all segments of the society. The Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality points out that high level of stigma and discrimination comes from the system itself and that their practice indicates that additional training is needed for health and social workers. People living with HIV are leader in the number of complaints related to discrimination based on the personal health status, which is the fifth most frequent basis of the reported discrimination in 2016 - the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality announces.



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