

Concept Note

Project Title: Establishment of an integrated palliative care system to improve the quality of life in Montenegro.

Name of Implementing Organization: Ministry of Health of Montenegro – Directorate for IPA and other project and health infrastructure

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Project Description:

What is the problem that this proposed project seeks to address?

Palliative care is an approach that aims to improve the quality of life for patients and their families facing the challenges of incurable, advanced illnesses by preventing and relieving suffering, pain, and other problems: physical, psychosocial, and spiritual. Palliative care encompasses the patient, family, and community, striving to maintain the best possible quality of life until death. When the disease progresses to a stage where active treatment can no longer prolong life (terminal phase), the focus of care shifts from curative to palliative.

This project should help address identified issues by establishing adequate infrastructure, providing training for healthcare workers, introducing financial mechanisms to support patients, and implementing awareness-raising programs to reduce stigma and increase awareness of palliative care. The aim is to improve the quality of life for patients with serious illnesses and their families and ensure they have access to dignified care in their final stages of life.

What are the goals of the project, and the activities that will be implemented toward those goals?

Project goal is to ensure timely, accessible, and quality palliative care for patients with serious illnesses in Montenegro, thus improving their quality of life in the terminal stages of the disease. Also, provide support to patients and their families through all aspects of palliative care: physical, psychosocial, and others, as well as educate healthcare workers on the principles of palliative care and developing a multidisciplinary approach to treatment.

Activities:

- Assessment of current capacities and resources of the healthcare system in Montenegro for providing palliative care.
- Development of training plans for healthcare workers on palliative care and the development of protocols for providing palliative care.
- Establishment of multidisciplinary teams to work on providing palliative care, including medical staff, psychologists, social workers, etc.

- Organization of training sessions and workshops for healthcare workers on palliative care and communication with patients and their families.
- Construction of palliative care centers and provision of equipment and medical supplies for providing quality care.
- Public education on palliative care and the importance of end-of-life planning.

Legal basis of the proposed project (laws and other legal regulations, EU regulations, strategic documents,etc.)

The Law on Health care protection (Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 3/2016, 39/2016, 2/2017, 44/2018, 24/2019, 82/2020, 8/2021, 3/2023 Article 42 - Healthcare institutions providing hospital healthcare may organize long-term - extended hospital care, rehabilitation, and palliative care for patients in the terminal phase of the disease.

Healthcare Development Strategy 2021-2027 with Action Plan 2023-2024 - 2.16 PALLIATIVE CARE

By forming multidisciplinary teams and mobile units, the project enhances care quality for terminally ill patients, in line with the strategy's goals. Establishing inpatient facilities, day care centers, and home support reflects the strategy's aim to expand palliative care services across various settings to meet patient needs. Overall, the project contributes to realizing the strategy's vision of comprehensive palliative care accessible to all patients in Montenegro.

What is the expected impact of the project?

The project will contribute to improving the quality of life for patients in the terminal stages of illness and their families, raising awareness about palliative care, reducing stigma associated with death, and developing an integrated palliative care system that is sustainable and adaptable to community needs.

How will this project be monitored and evaluated?

The project will be monitored by the Ministry of Health with the support of healthcare institutions in Montenegro. Within the Ministry of Health, there is a structured organizational unit - a directorate tasked with project implementation, both at the national and cross-border IPA level.

Project Staff

Please outline the qualifications and experience of your organization and the project team as they are related to your project plan and goals.

The Ministry of Health has experience with the implementation of cross-border projects, but also experience in the implementation of the national IPA.

At the first call, we successfully implemented the NeurNet project (<https://www.interreg-hr-ba-me.eu/project/neurnet/>) with partners from Croatia (Institute for Emergency Medicine (previously Institute for Telemedicine) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federal Ministry of Health).

Apart from this project, we were also involved in the AdriHealthMob project (<https://innopolis.org/projects/adrihealthmob/>) , which was part of the IPA Adriatic Program where we collaborated with the Croatian Ministry of Health.

Additionally, we were involved in the PHASE Project ([Home | PHASE \(italy-albania-montenegro.eu\)](#)) which was a part of the Interreg IPA Italy-Albania-Montenegro.