

Health equity for people with disabilities

EPW core priorities and flagships

Moving towards universal health coverage

WHO collaboration

Health research and data provision
Partnership between the Regional
Office and Country Office

Since 2007, the Constitution of Montenegro has guaranteed special protection and free health care for people with disabilities. More recently, Montenegro put health equity for people with disabilities even higher on the political agenda; it became the first country in the Region to implement the WHO Disability Guide for Action and ensure those with disabilities have equitable access to health services.

WHO headquarters, the Regional Office and the Country Office are committed to supporting these goals. In 2023 technical experts assessed the gaps in disability inclusion within the national health system, interviewing stakeholders from PHC centres, hospitals, NGOs and patient advocate groups, laying the groundwork for a national action plan. The plan is currently in development and focuses on 17 key activities across the 10 PHC areas of the health system. As Montenegro is committed to universal health coverage, the strategy seeks to align itself with the EU Global Health Strategy.

The impact

The situational analysis, supported by the Regional Office, provided Montenegro with a clear roadmap to address inequities in health-care access. The collaboration between WHO and the Ministry of Health has brought international expertise and data-driven insights to addressing disability inclusion in health care. The development of a national action plan marks a key achievement, setting the stage for long-term reform.

Lessons learned

- Making the health system inclusive for people with disabilities improves the system for everyone.
- The action plan should align with Ministry of Health priorities and be integrated into key activities and plans where possible.
- Political commitment, alongside strong multisectoral collaboration, is the foundation for success.

Donors and partners

Ministry of Health; national NGOs; various United Nations agencies



Montenegro is the first country in the European Region to implement the recommendations in *Health equity for persons with disabilities: a guide for action*. @ UNICEF Montenegro/Dusko Miljanic

“The level of health care for people with disabilities is a true measure of our commitment to creating a more inclusive society.”

Ms Milica Markovic, Independent Adviser at the Directorate for Health Protection, Regulated Professions and Chambers Monitoring, Montenegro

What's next?

Montenegro is following the official procedure for writing and clearing the national action plan to ensure it follows appropriate rules and guidelines before adoption. Once approved, the action plan will drive forward key reforms, such as improving access to health-care services and updating regulations within the Health Insurance Fund.