

Advancing access to outpatient medicines

UZBEKISTAN

EPW core priorities and flagships

Moving towards universal health coverage

WHO collaboration

Cultivating knowledge exchange
Biennial collaborative agreement

Uzbekistan has struggled to ensure a timely and uninterrupted supply of essential medicines, leading to high out-of-pocket costs and poor health outcomes, especially for those with chronic conditions. With the Regional Office's support, the Ministry of Health and the State Health Insurance Fund introduced a reimbursement scheme for medicines targeting five key NCDs, aligning with the President's priority of equitable health-care access. Patients now receive selected medicines at no cost from community pharmacies, which are reimbursed by the State Health Insurance Fund.

The Regional Office's expert guidance, based on best practices, has been essential to success. In 2023, for example, it facilitated discussions among six countries, including Uzbekistan, focused on medicines pricing, selection and reimbursement. Seamless collaboration between WHO offices and national partners is actively shaping a sustainable, patient-centred health system.

The impact

Starting as a pilot in Syrdarya Oblast in 2022, the reimbursement scheme later expanded to the capital of Tashkent. It continues to progressively increase the geographical coverage, the volume of reimbursed products and the number of beneficiaries. By May 2024, over 40 000 people were covered under the scheme, with 11 medicines eligible for reimbursement.

Lessons learned

- Health financing reform should be comprehensive, covering both health services and medical products.
- Effective pricing and reimbursement mechanisms should be adapted to the national context and health priorities.
- The Ministry of Health's coordination and the State Health Insurance Fund's inclusive outreach to stakeholders are paving the way to further expand the reimbursement scheme.

Donors and partners

Ministry of Health; State Health Insurance Fund; UHC Partnership



A patient receives medicines in a community pharmacy participating in Uzbekistan's reimbursement programme.
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“WHO's comprehensive support has been instrumental in shaping our national reimbursement system into a patient-centred partnership.”
Dr Farukh Sharipov, Deputy Minister of Health and former Executive Director of the State Health Insurance Fund, Uzbekistan

“This collaboration multiplies the impact of the medicines reimbursement system, increasing coverage and helping us to reach more people to cater for their health.”
Mr Zokhid Ermatov, Chief Executive Officer of the State Health Insurance Fund, Uzbekistan

What's next?

Uzbekistan plans to expand the reimbursement system nationwide. The initiative has created a platform on which additional priority medicines can be added, further improving coverage. WHO remains committed to supporting Uzbekistan's journey towards universal health coverage and Sustainable Development Goal 3: health and well-being for all.

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