



THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S COVID-19 RESPONSE IN BELARUS

The United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided \$1.7 million to help Belarus respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This assistance is helping prepare laboratory systems, activate case-finding and event-based surveillance, support technical experts for response and preparedness, and bolster risk communications. Medical and technical experts are helping Belarus to prepare for COVID-19 cases, communicating accurate public health information to the public, and supporting community engagement activities with a particular focus on infection prevention and control, including the provision of medical supplies and ensuring access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene in COVID-19 designated health care facilities, social service centers, and other government facilities.

USAID is supporting media campaigns to inform citizens on how they can help stop the spread of the virus. In addition, USAID is helping to mitigate the secondary effects of the pandemic by supporting social and mental health support to front-line workers and other social service activities.

We are also expanding our work to stop trafficking in persons to ensure vulnerable groups have access to vital public health information, including the design and distribution of COVID-19 prevention advice and healthcare service leaflets. Given the increased demand for migration and trafficking in persons advice services caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, USAID is strengthening its support to the safe migration hotline.

Program Highlights

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO COVID-19 IN BELARUS

- **9 educational videos** on using personal protective equipment and improving assistance to patients distributed to all hospitals with COVID-19 infected patients.
- More than **2,300 frontline medical workers** were reached by a series of **7 webinars** on diagnostics, treatment, and prevention of COVID-19 organized by the joint USAID-UNICEF

COVID-19 response activity. A **video conference** on the practical use of oxygen concentrators for respiratory support to patients with pulmonary pathology was organized jointly with the Ministry of Health; 210 Belarusian medical workers attended the conference.

- **Information materials** for medical workers and the public developed and distributed by UNICEF with USAID support, including info-posters on COVID-19 prevention for distribution in banks, public transport, schools, supermarkets and hospitals; a **brochure on social distancing and two videos** on prevention practices for wide public use, tips for parents on how to engage children during COVID-19 restrictions, and a **training manual** "Emergency psychological assistance for health care professionals in emergency situations."
- USAID is helping mitigate the secondary effects of the pandemic by supporting **social and mental health programs for front-line medical specialists** who work with COVID-19 infected patients. USAID-supported **webinars on emergency psychological assistance** and support reached more than 2,300 medical workers. The webinars were conducted by the BelMAPO specialists.
- **7 brochures on psychological health** and overcoming stress were developed by the specialists of the Department of Psychotherapy and Medical Psychology of the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education (BelMAPE) for distribution in healthcare institutions. The brochures cover 7 topical issues – "Depression", "Can't Fall Asleep?", "How to Resist Panic Attacks and Overcome Fear?", "Burnout Syndrome", "Childhood Fears", "Anxiety disorder", "How to survive the death of a loved one?"
- **Individual psychological consultations** organized within the project were provided to 346 persons, including 50 medics. More than 1,500 individuals benefited from **distance relaxation psychotherapeutic support**. A **webinar on adolescents' mental health**, facilitated by two international experts from Switzerland and Ukraine, covered 340 leading specialists of the national and regional specialized medical institutions.
- USAID supported the delivery of over 12,500 liters of **sanitizer** to the Emergency Response Center of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus and two correctional colonies; as well as 230 **pyrometers** to orphanages, boarding schools, social service centers, and prison colonies throughout Belarus.
- 25,276 liters of **sanitizer**, 4,685 liters of **antibacterial soap**, and 2,235 **elbow dispensers** delivered to the Republican Transfusiology Center, the Emergency Response Center, orphanages, institutions for children with disabilities, and Belarus' border checkpoints.
- A total of **360 bacterial air recirculators, 40 pyrometers, 30,281 liters of antiseptic, 10,945 dispensers and 34,456 liters of bactericidal soap** were procured and delivered to the educational institutions, including boarding schools, social educational centers with shelters, sanatorium pre-schools, kindergartens and secondary schools, of all the six Belarusian regions within the joint USAID-UNICEF COVID-19 response activity.
- A creative "**Clean Trend**" **handwashing info-campaign** was developed within the joint USAID-UNICEF COVID-response activity to promote good hygiene practices, physical distancing, handwashing and mask wearing among children and youth at schools and kindergartens. A series of **colourful information materials** developed within the campaign include bright bathroom and mirror stickers; 4 animations for Instagram stories; 5 Instagram masks; the "Clean Fairy Tales" book helping kids to remember proper hygiene and preventive measures to minimize the risk of COVID-19. 52,000 copies of colorful "Clean Trend" info-posters on COVID-19 prevention will be distributed to Belarusian education institutions. "Clean Trend" radio and TV social ads and billboards will be placed in 2021.

- With USAID support, IOM Belarus ensured the safety of human trafficking survivors and NGOs that provide direct full-scale reintegration assistance to victims and carry out trafficking prevention interventions across Belarus, through the procurement and delivery of 4,000 **medical masks**, 10,000 **protection gloves** and 255.5 litres of **hand sanitizer**.
- La Strada Belarus Programme in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration and with support from USAID and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, launched an **information campaign to help labor migrants** from Belarus who faced violations of their rights **during the COVID-19 pandemic**. A series of **8 videos** on the protection of labor rights of Belarusians working in Poland, Lithuania, the Czech Republic has been created. The USAID-supported campaign reached around 400,000 people.
- USAID supported the procurement of **personal protective equipment** for the Belarusian Red Cross Society, a key IOM partner in the reintegration of victims of human trafficking. This equipment, including 1,700 **medical masks**, 172 liters of **hand sanitizer**, and 4,400 **rubber gloves**, helps reduce the risks of COVID-19 spreading among victims of human trafficking. It also protects the regional NGO's specialists who provide rehabilitation and reintegration services and conduct human trafficking prevention activities in Belarus.

PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO COMBAT THE GLOBAL CORONAVIRUS

- USAID supported the delivery of 250 **oxygen concentrators** for oxygen therapy. The equipment from the world's leading manufacturer was transferred to the republican reserve. Within the second wave of COVID-19 outbreak, the oxygen concentrators will be distributed by the Republican Center for Medical Response to those health facilities where additional oxygen support will be most required.
- The Republican Center for Hygiene, Epidemiology and Public Health received special equipment purchased and delivered with USAID support – 16,450 **test kits for diagnosing coronavirus infection by PCR-testing**, as well as 16,450 **disposable sampling kits**, 20 **kits for the extraction of nucleic acids** and 3 **magnetic racks**. The equipment will reach up to 16,000 people with PCR-testing for COVID-19 and helps the laboratory service of Belarus to be more effective in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Thermal imaging cameras, pulse-oximeters, infrared pyrometers, personal and collective protective equipment, and disinfectants** were purchased and delivered with USAID support to the **Minsk National Airport**, the largest entry point into Belarus. The equipment helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 between passengers, airport employees, and the public. The **protective equipment donation** also included disposable coveralls; full-face masks with filters; FFP2 and FFP3 respirators; disposable masks; protective shields and gloves; panoramic sealed goggles; and elbow and contactless dispensers for disinfectants.

For more information about how USAID is responding to COVID-19 across the world, please visit www.usaid.gov/coronavirus.

For details on specific in-country response activities, please contact USAID at press@usaid.gov.

MISSION

Victoria Mitchell Avdiu
Belarus Country Office Director
USAID Regional Mission to Ukraine and Belarus
4 Igor Sikorsky Street
Kyiv, Ukraine 04112
E-mail: vmitchellavdiu@usaid.gov

HEADQUARTERS

Stephen Wiese
Desk Officer for Belarus
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC, USA 20523
E-mail: belarusdesk@usaid.gov