

Harm Reduction Policy and Treatment in Albania



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Content

1. Relevant Policy Framework related to health and substance use
2. Harm reduction Treatment Services
3. Prevalence of Drug Use and estimation of drug use harms
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1. Relevant Policy Framework related to health and substance use

- **National Health Strategy 2021-2030;**
- **Health Promotion Action Plan 2022-2030;**
- **Strategy for the Development of Primary Health Care Services in Albania 2020-2025;**
- **National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Non-Infection Disease 2022-2030;**
- **National Action Plan on HIV/AIDS 2020-2025**

1. Relevant Policy Framework related to health and substance use (cont.)

- ❖ Main legislative documents related to substance use and abuse are:
 - No. 7975, dated 26.7.1995 “*On Narcotics And Psychotropic Substances*” as amended, is the main legislative framework on this field, by sanctioning the prohibition of production and marketing of psychotropic substances.
 - Law on Public Health, no.10138, dated 11.5.2009;

1. Relevant Policy Framework related to health and substance use/ Current state (cont.)

Relevant important bylaws:

- DCM 299/2011 "On the Approval of the regulation "On the functioning of the National Coordination Committee of the War Against Drugs, the Secretariat of this Committee and the Office of the National Drug Data System“;
- Clinical guidelines for the provision of methadone maintenance therapy developed in 2019;

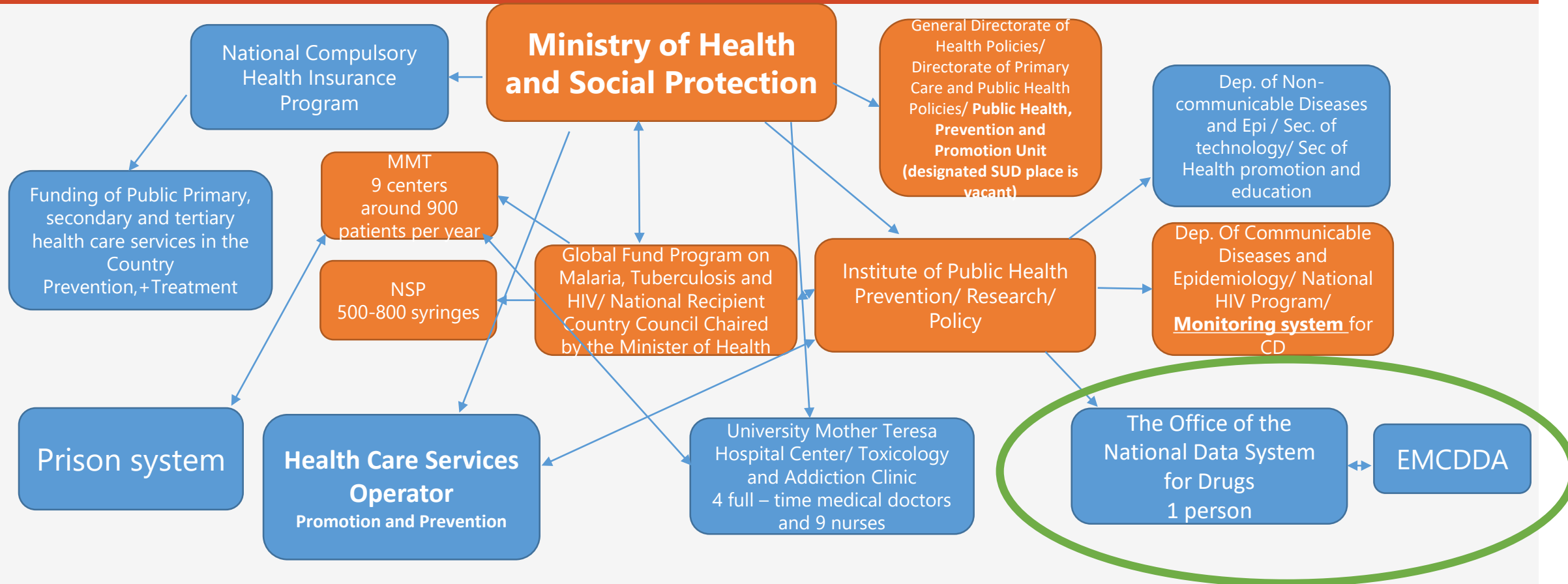
1. Relevant Policy Framework related to health and substance use/ Current state (cont.)

- With the approval of the national health strategy, the work for the development of the Action Plan for the Prevention, Treatment and Reduction of Drug Harm has began (a process which will take into consideration vulnerabilities in the initiation of drug use, evidence-based preventive interventions and policies, pharmacological and psychosocial treatment, rehabilitation, prevention of the health and social consequences of drug use and drug use disorders, in the light of human rights and the dignity of individuals).

1. Relevant Policy Framework related to health and substance use/ International drug policy framework:

- EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 and EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025
- Council Recommendation of 18 June 2003 on the prevention and reduction of health-related harm associated with drug dependence
- UNODC – WHO Prevention (2018) and Drug Treatment (2020) Standards
- EMCDDA relevant documents

Harm reduction Treatment Services: Organizational Framework



Prevalence of Drug Use

Surveys available for children and young people

The latest data available on drug use among children and youth is from the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children Survey (HBSC) from 2017/18, and the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) for the year 2015.

In the 2017/18 HBSC study, the lifetime prevalence of cannabis use among youth aged 15 is 3% among girls and 13% among boys. The European average of cannabis use among 15-year-old boys and girls respectively 15% and 11%.

While in the most recent ESPAD study, precisely in 2015, the prevalence of cannabis use by students aged 15-16 years is 7%, however, this prevalence is 2 times lower than the European average of lifetime cannabis use for this age group.

The extent of Illicit Drug Use and Dependence

In 2019:

Estimated number of people with problematic drug use (IDU) is: 6970 people

In 2020:

Opioid Substitution Treatment: 930 patients

Hospitalized-based Detox: 443 patients

Future plans:

- Development and proper adoption of the Action Plan for the Prevention, Treatment and Reduction of Drug Harm 2023 – 2026
- The focus will be on improving prevention, identification, and referral at the primary health care level through the health promotion and psychosocial health care workers established in primary health care services.
- Extension and improvement of existing treatment services with a focus on the integration of psychosocial interventions and continuity of care approach
- The Harm Reduction Intervention will be addressed in the new strategic health document: **The proposal idea** will be that the HRP will be mainly or co-funded by the Albanian Government /Ministry of Health through its National Health Compulsory program or a dedicated health budget and GF.

Thank you for your attention!

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