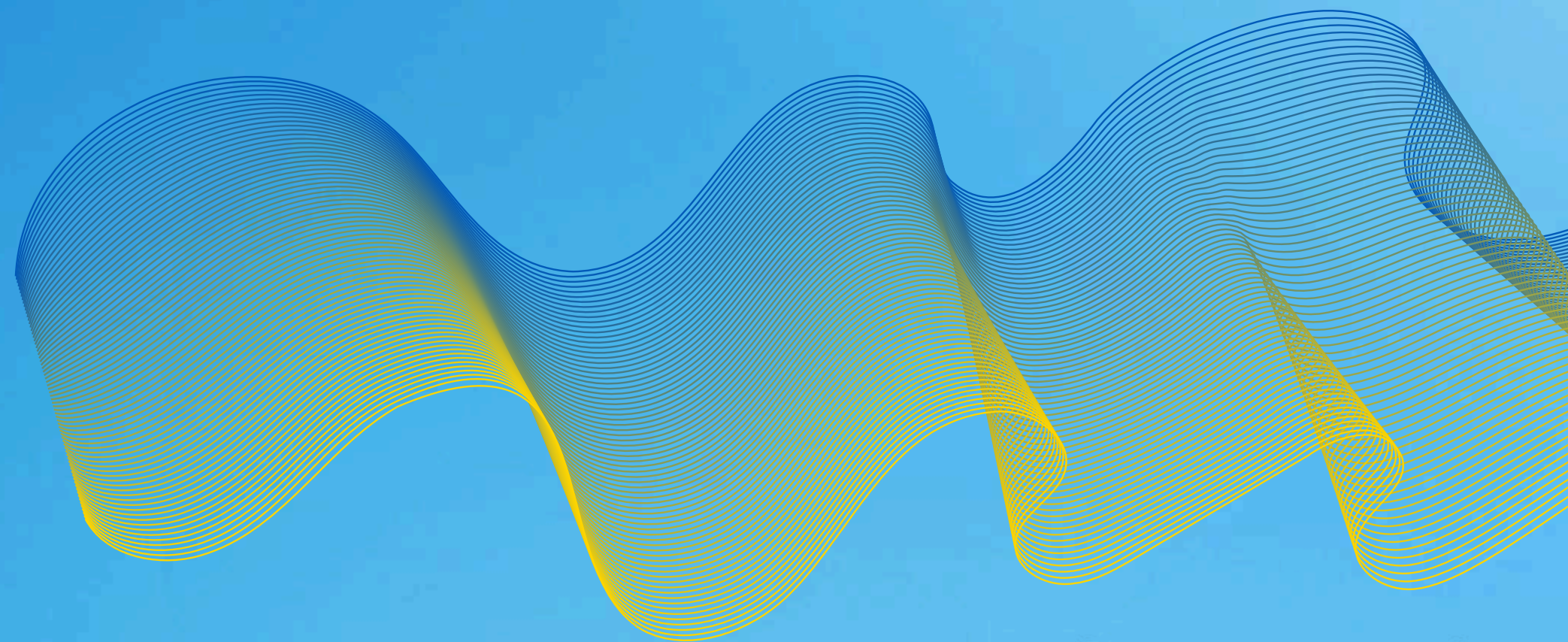




HARM REDUCTION PROGRAMS IN UKRAINIAN PENITENTIARY SYSTEM

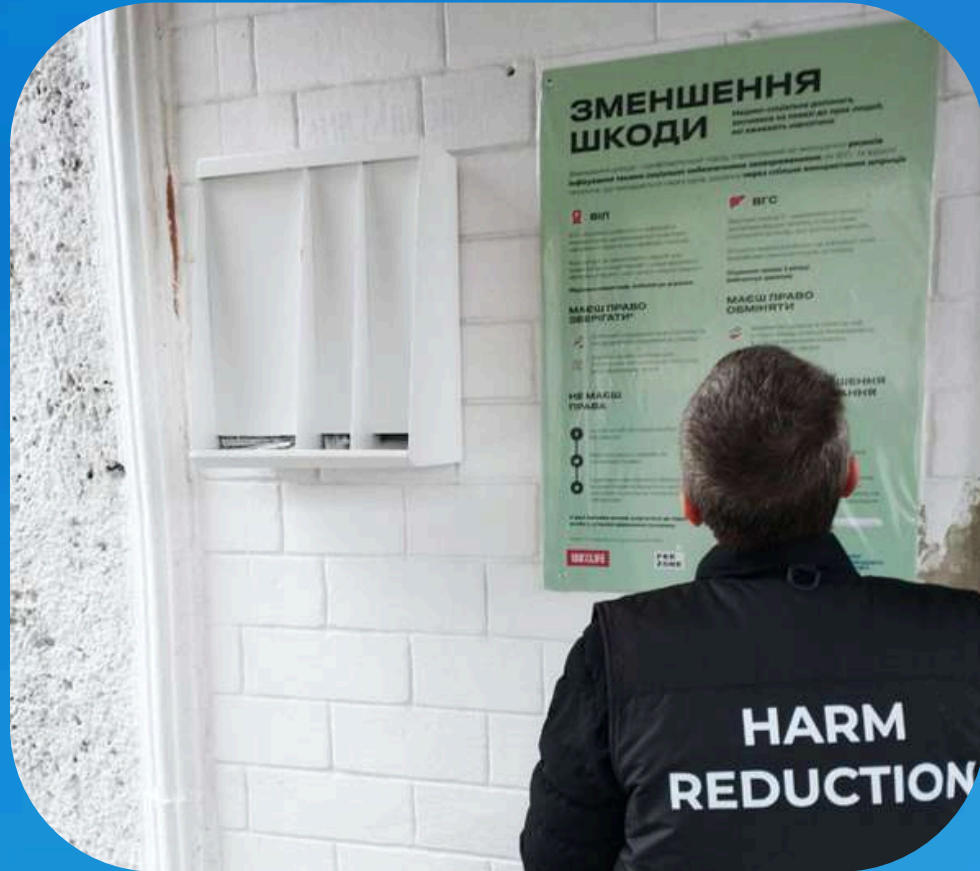


DR. PAVLO MARCHENKO

**HEAD OF ORGANISATIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT,
PSYCHIATRIST, HEALTH CENTRE OF THE STATE PENITENTIARY
SERVICE OF UKRAINE**



Background for implementation \ Why is it relevant for Ukraine?



They help prevent overdoses and stabilize the condition of addicts, which in turn reduces conflict and helps to control the behavior of prisoners.



This reduces the dependence of prisoners on non-formal sources of drugs, which are often associated with internal criminal schemes, debt relations and violence.



Harm reduction programs are not only about medicine, but also about a tool for stabilizing the prison environment, improving security and management control.

THE NATIONAL STRATEGY – OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

The Strategy of Reforming the Penitentiary System

Strategic Goals:

- Ensuring counteraction to the spread of high-impact infectious diseases among convicts and persons taken into custody;
- Providing quality medical care to persons in custody and convicts with mental and behavioral disorders, including those resulting from the use of psychoactive substances;

We also act in compliance with the
National HIV Strategy until 2030

According to the CPT recommendations, with our assistance, in 2025, all HCF's in penitentiary system established the positions of clinical psychologists. .

Components of a comprehensive response

Harm reduction programs

- syringe exchange, condom distribution, basic information;
- first contact that starts the path of change;
- builds trust and motivation to move to deeper interventions.

Opioid substitution therapy (OST)

- stabilizes physical condition, reduces the need for illegal drugs;
- reduces the risk of infections;
- allows for controlled behavioral influence and prepares a person for rehabilitation.

Therapeutic community (TC)

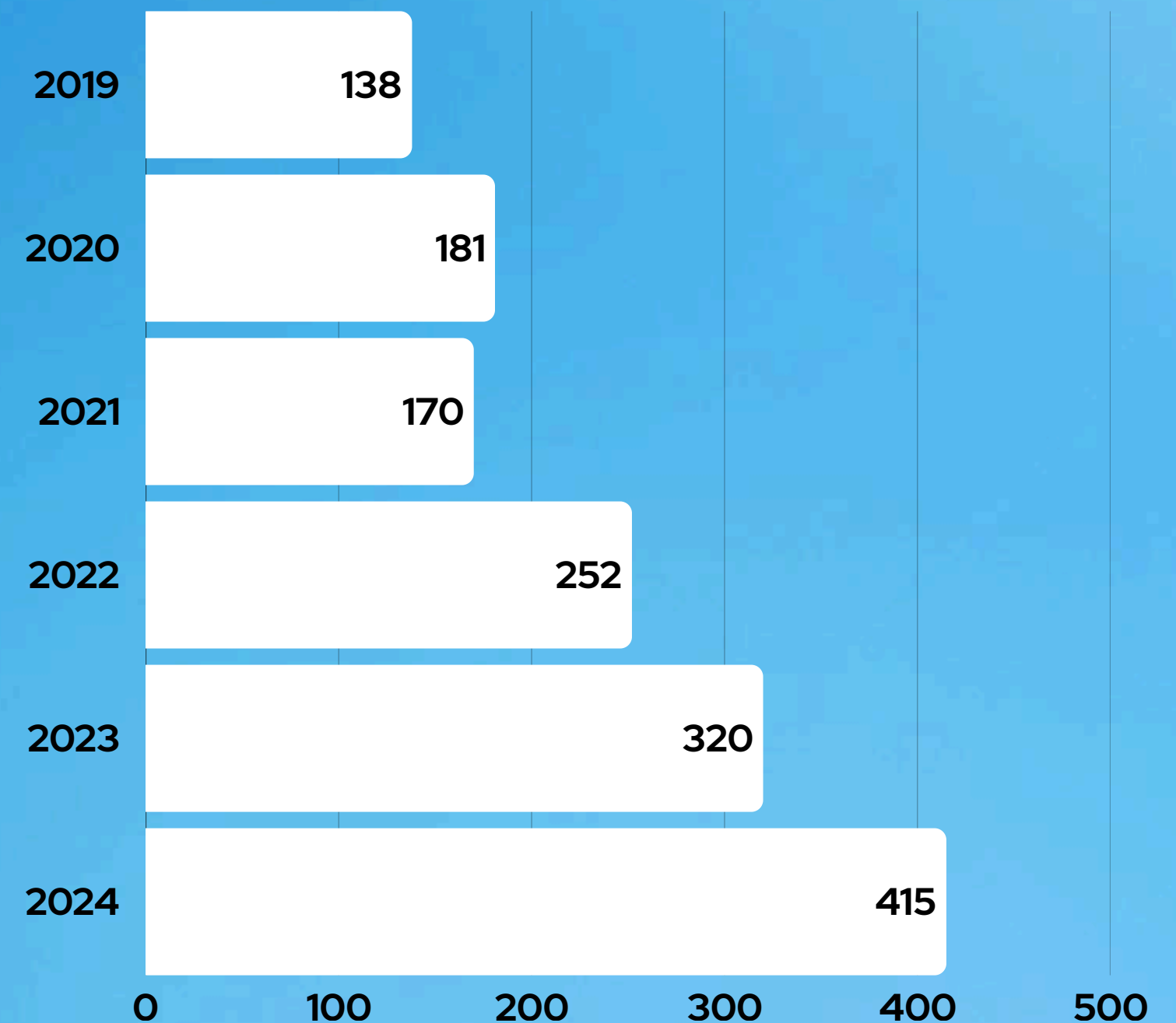
- long-term psychosocial rehabilitation;
- helps to change behavioral patterns, restore social skills and values.

OST IN UKRAINIAN PENITENTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Since the launch of **OST** in penitentiary institutions in 2019, 1,476 convicts **have received treatment.**

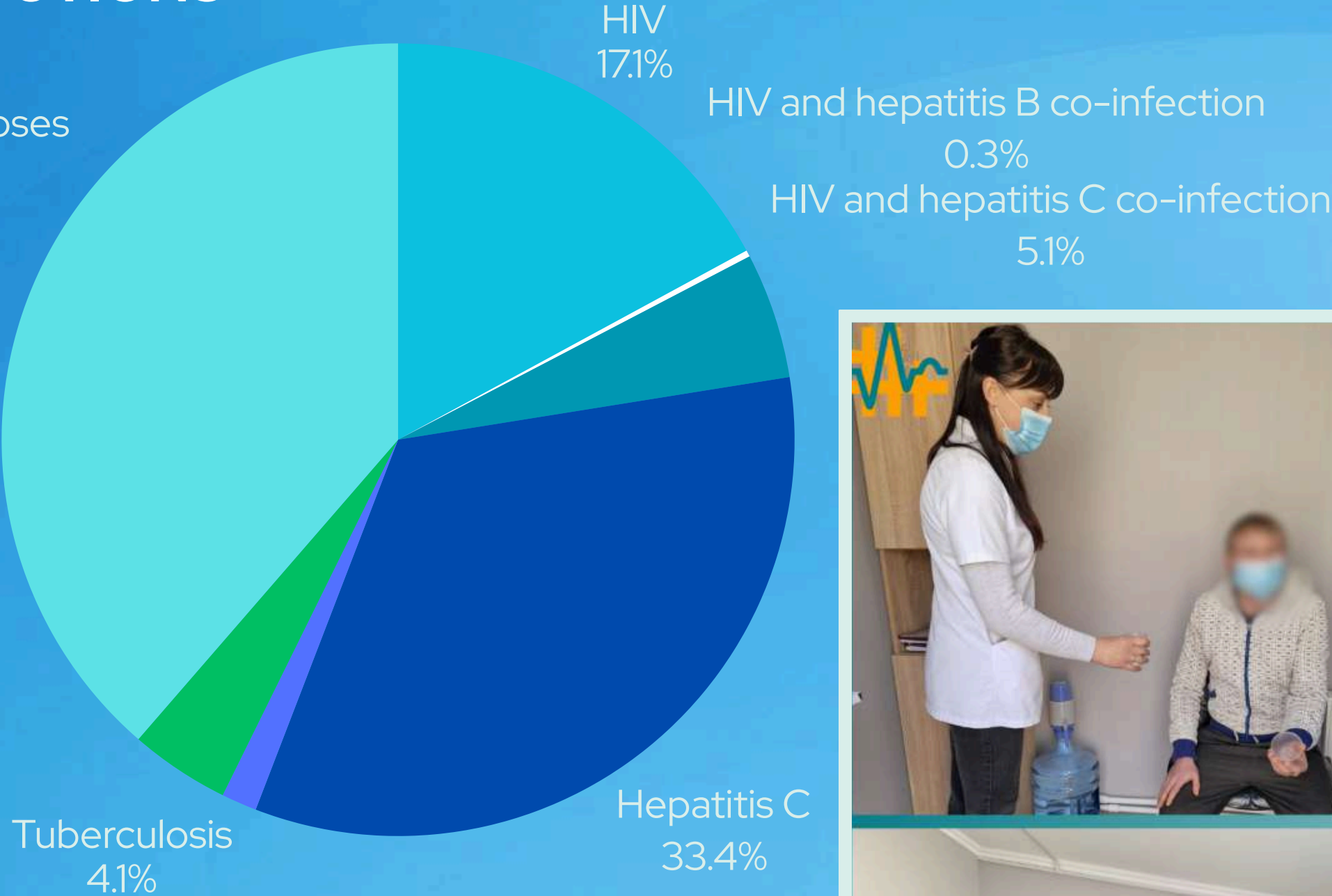
$$\frac{415 - 138}{138} \times 100\% \approx 200.7\%$$

From 2019 to early 2025, we observe an increase in patients of approximately **201%**.



OST IN UKRAINIAN PENITENTIARY INSTITUTIONS

OST patients without recorded infectious diagnoses
38.6%



In 2024, 761 patients received OST.
Among them, 467 patients had
high-impact infectious diseases

OST IN UKRAINIAN PENITENTIARY INSTITUTIONS

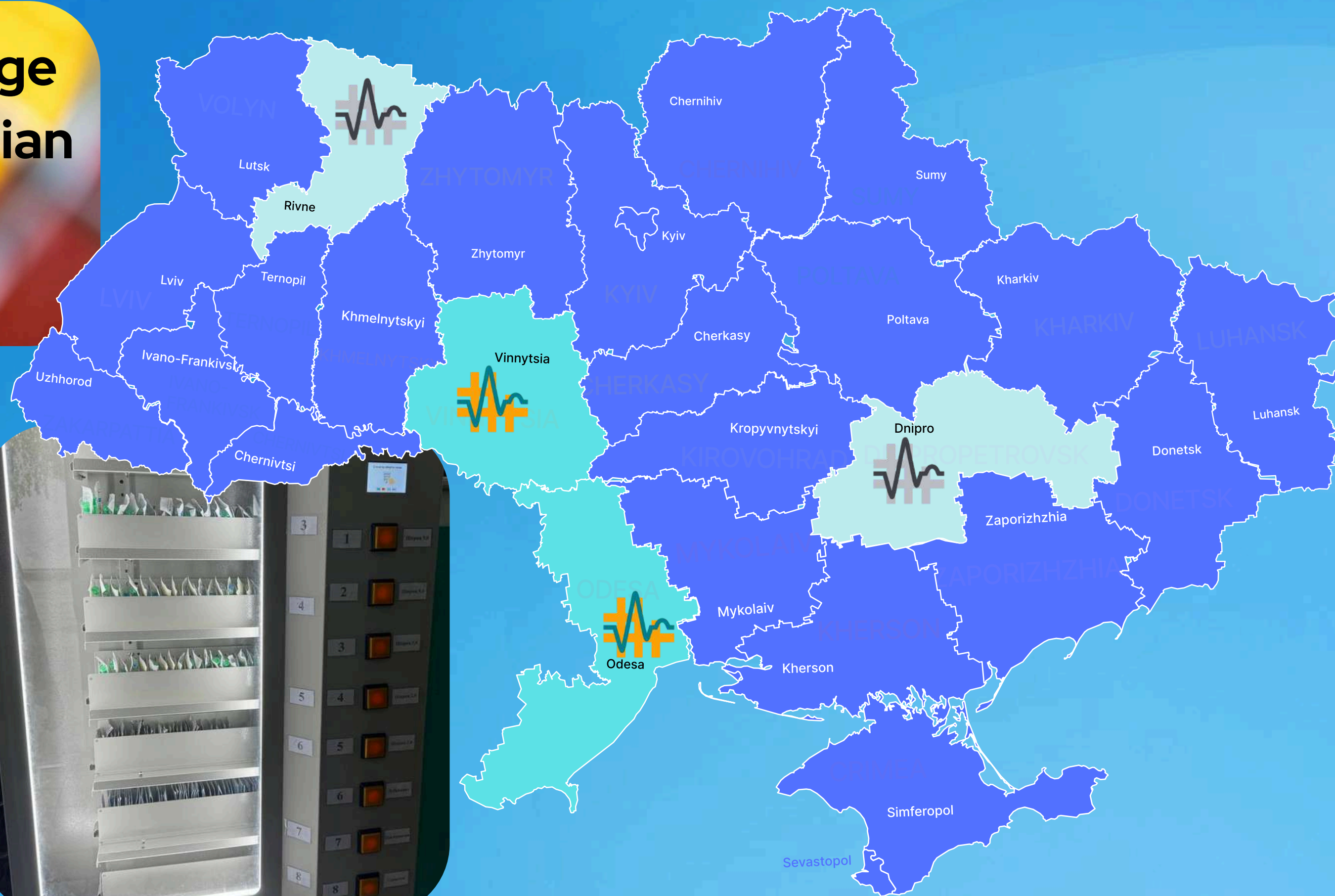
One of our priorities today is to create an OST cabinet in the Kyiv Pre-Trial Detention Centre, one of the largest pre-trial detention centers in Europe.

- OST program already implemented at 19 sites
- More than 520 people receiving OST treatment.

Kyiv pre-trial detention centre



Syringe exchange points in Ukrainian penitentiary institutions



The role of peer consultants



The "Peer-to-Peer" Approach



Oleksandr, is from the Stryzhavka colony.

At the end of 2024, he personally conducted screening with rapid tests for **244 people - 121 of whom** were referred for medical examination in a timely manner, thanks to the fact that the interlocutor was "one of their people."

Stryzhavka as a potential pilot for a Therapeutic Community

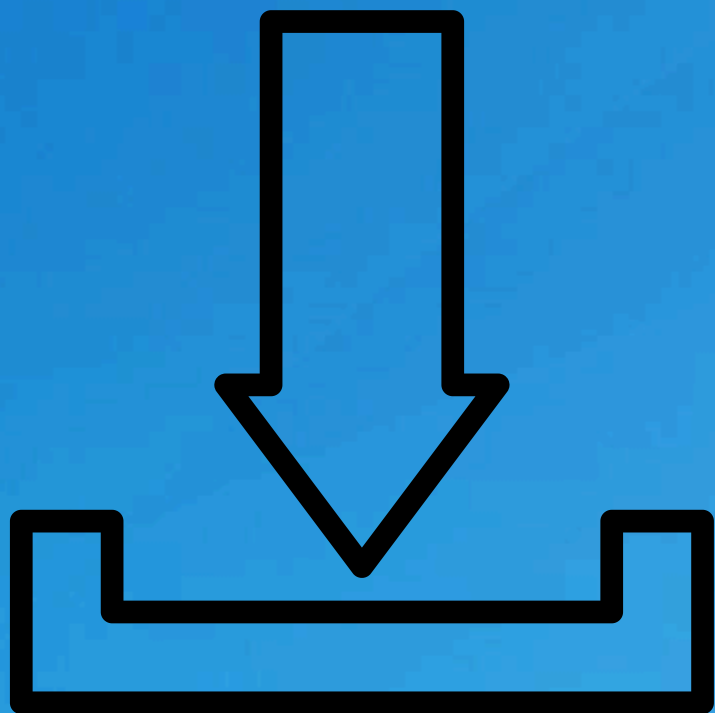


Stryzhavka is already an example of program integration:

- OST cabinet;
- syringe exchange and contraceptive distribution program;
- trained medical and psychological staff.



Internal and external challenges



Security vs therapy

Resources and institutional capacity



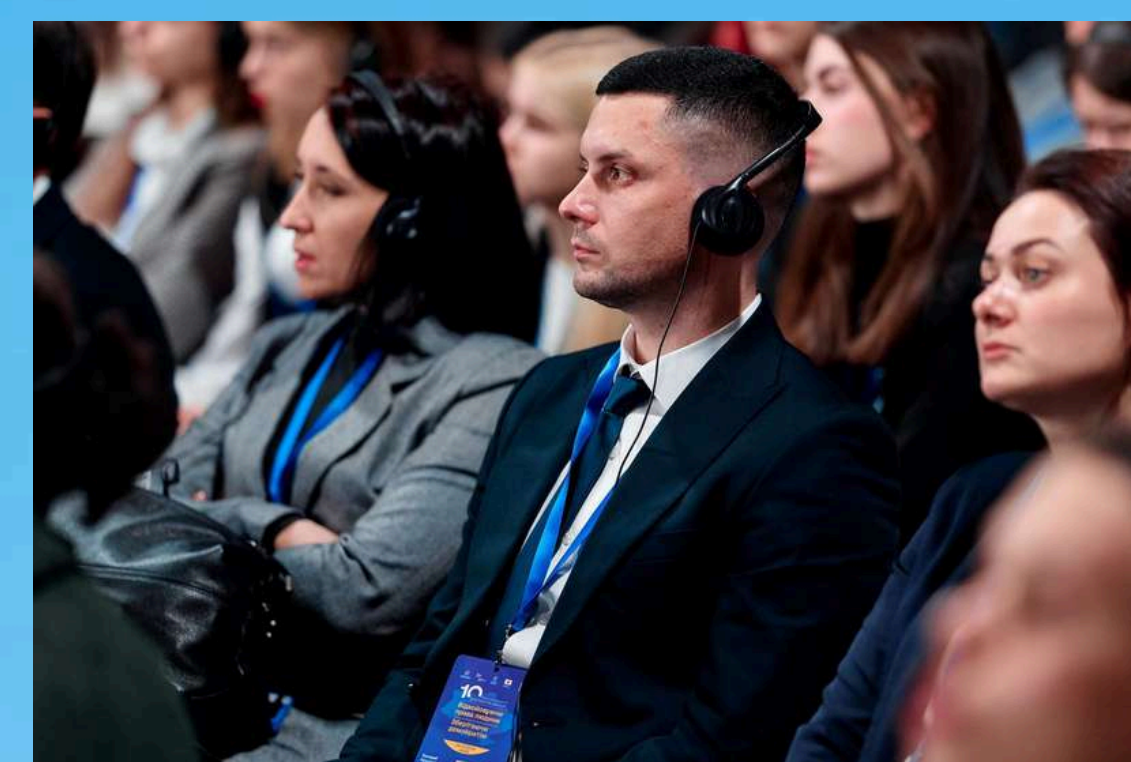
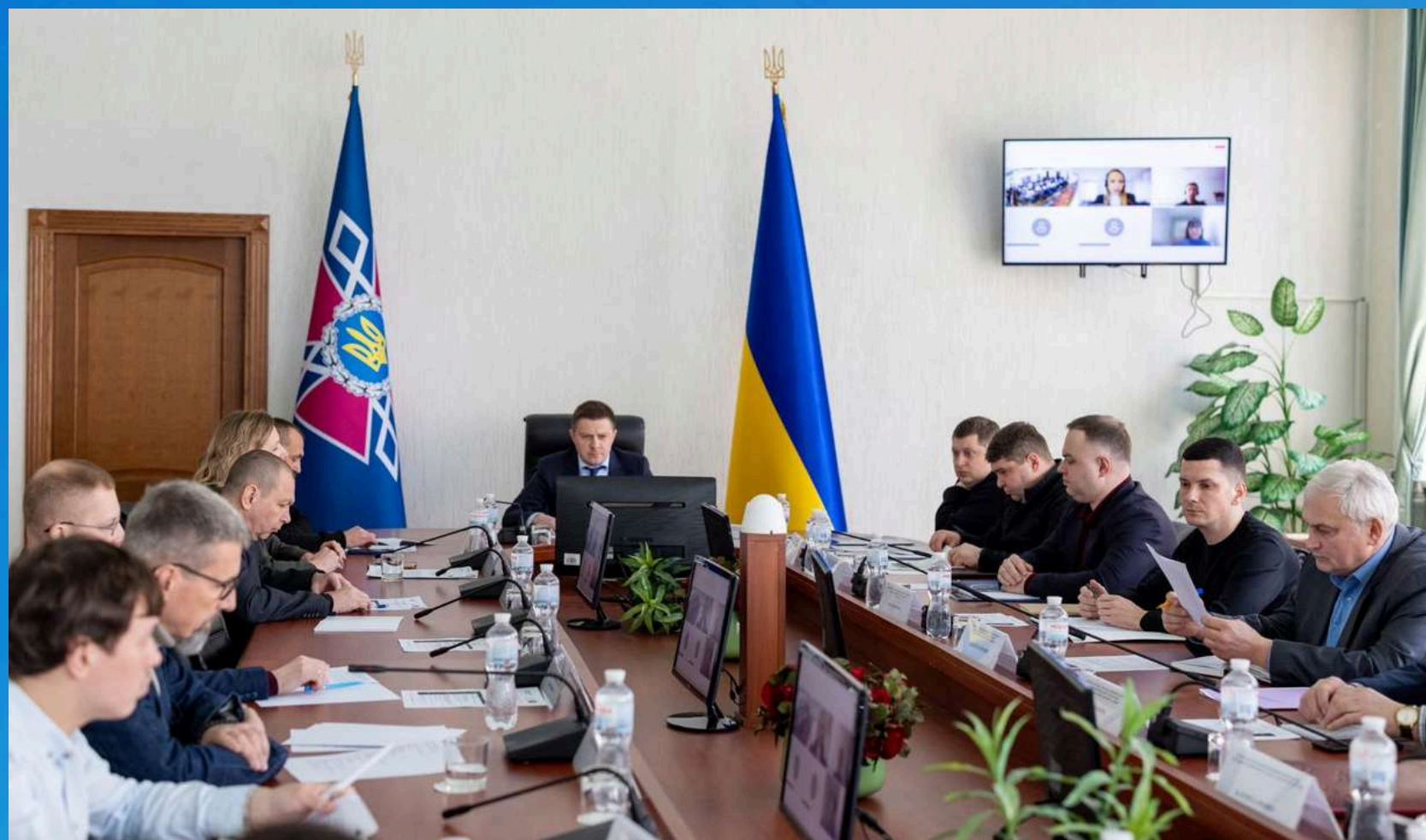
Before



After



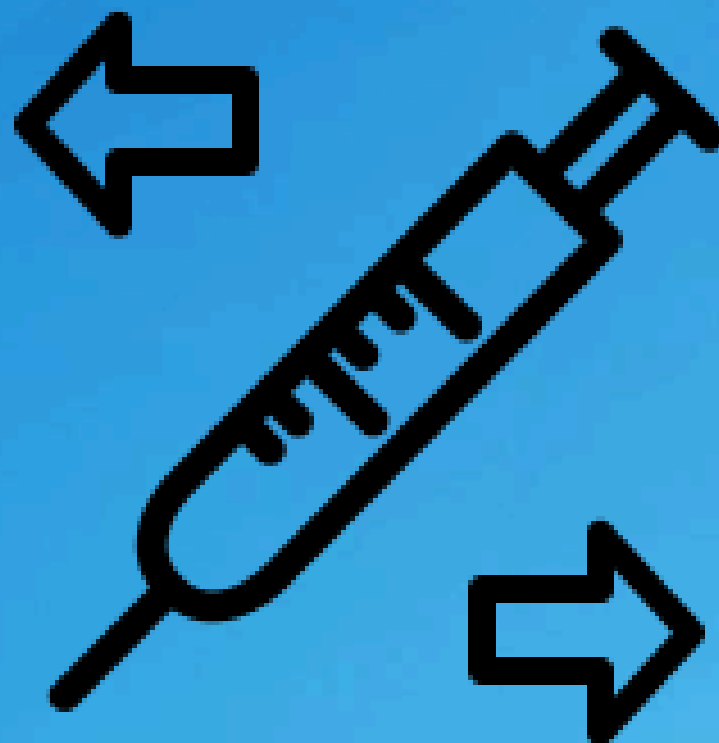
International support



Next steps – upscaling proven solutions



Increase the number
of institutions where
OST is implemented

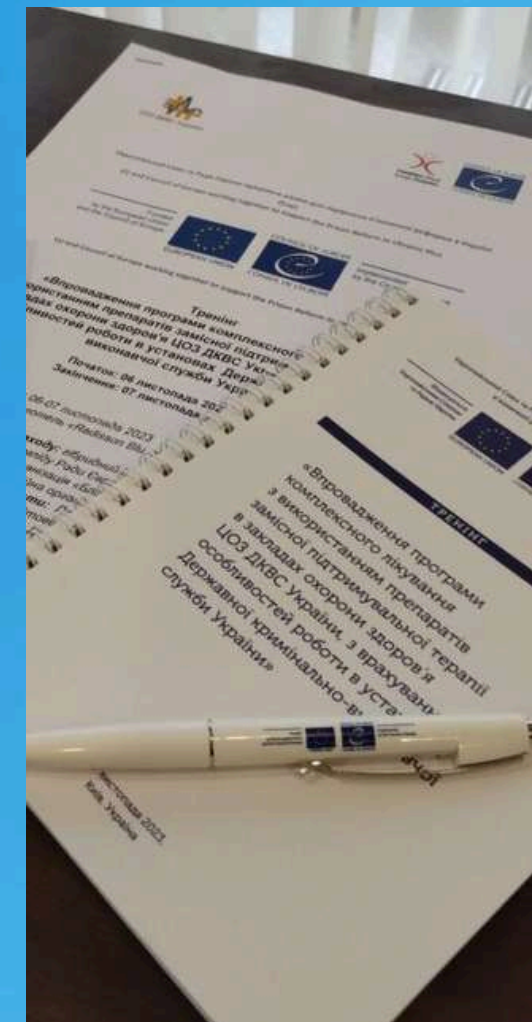


Expand syringe
exchange programs



Continue training
of medical and
non-medical staff

Perspectives for scaling up



Conclusions

even in difficult conditions it is possible to provide continuity of medical care, reduce the risks of HIV and viral hepatitis, and increase safety inside the institutions!

The background features a series of overlapping, wavy lines in shades of blue and yellow, creating a sense of depth and movement. The lines are thin and densely packed, forming a mesh-like structure that undulates across the frame. The overall color palette is a gradient of blues, from a deep cerulean to a lighter sky blue, with the yellow lines providing a vibrant contrast.

Thank you for your attention!