

Republic of Latvia
Cabinet
Order No. 589
Adopted 14 October 2014

On the Public Health Policy Guidelines 2014-2020

1. To support the Public Health Policy Guidelines 2014-2020 (hereinafter – the Guidelines).
2. To determine the Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and the Ministry of Agriculture as the institutions responsible for implementation of the tasks specified in the Guidelines (hereinafter – the responsible institutions).
3. To determine the Ministry of Health as the responsible institution for ensuring control of the implementation of the Guidelines.
4. For the responsible institutions to submit information to the Ministry of Health regarding the progress and results of the fulfilment of the tasks specified in the Guidelines up to 1 July 2017 and 1 July 2021.
5. For the Ministry of Health to prepare and for the Minister for Health to submit the following informative reports to the Cabinet according to specific procedures:
 - 5.1. up to 1 November 2017 – the interim report on implementation of the Guidelines;
 - 5.2. up to 1 November 2021 – the final report on implementation of the Guidelines, including proposals on the development of public health policy for subsequent years.
6. The respective institutions shall ensure the implementation of the measures provided in the Guidelines in 2014 within the scope of the State budget resources assigned, in turn, the issue on assigning additional State budget resources for implementation of the measures provided for in the Guidelines for 2015-2020 shall be examined in the process of preparation of a draft Cabinet law on the State budget for the current year and a draft law on the medium-term budget framework together with proposals of all ministries and other central State authorities for new policy initiatives according to the financial possibilities of the State budget.
7. Cabinet Order No. 504 of 5 October 2011, On the Public Health Policy Guidelines 2011-2017 (*Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 2011, No. 158), is repealed.

Prime Minister

Laimdota Straujuma

Minister for Finance

Andris Vilks

Summary of the Public Health Policy Guidelines 2014-2020

The Public Health Policy Guidelines 2014-2020 (hereinafter – the Guidelines) are a medium-term policy planning document, which is based on the World Health Organisation Regional Strategy for Europe “Health 2020” and has been drawn up in order to update the situation description included in the Public Health Policy Guidelines 2011-2017, formulation of the problems, objectives, policy results, the tasks defined in action directions¹, and to align them with the National Development Plan of Latvia 2014-2020 and the new financial planning period.

The main causes of death of inhabitants of Latvia are non-communicable diseases: mainly cardiovascular diseases, malignant tumours and external causes of death.

The development of non-communicable diseases is largely influenced by factors related to the lifestyle – unhealthy diet, insufficient physical activity, and harmful habits (smoking, use of alcohol and drugs). The most efficient prevention measures for cardiovascular diseases are to quit smoking, regular physical activities, to choose healthy diet and to maintain adequate body weight.

Health and development of a child in prenatal period and during the first year of life is mainly determined by health of his or her mother and father, as well as the knowledge of the parents regarding their own health and health of the child expected and their care for the child. However, the knowledge of parents on the negative impact of using addictive substances on the health of the pregnant woman and the foetus, on the significance of commencing health care of a pregnant woman in due time and on preventive measures for reducing child injury is insufficient.

Each year the potential years of life lost due to external causes of death in Latvia (up to 64 years of age) exceed 40 thousand. Mortality due to external causes of death in Latvia is approximately twice as high as on average in the European Union. It may be prevented by promoting environmental safety (for example, road traffic safety, housing safety), as well as by educating the public regarding the impact of lifestyle habits and behaviour on the health of an individual.

The spread of several communicable diseases in many countries across the world, including Latvia, has been interrupted, restricted or completely eliminated by introducing new efficient vaccines, by improving the epidemiological surveillance system, as well as by efficiently co-ordinating international action in cases of epidemic. However, the risks of epidemic still exist because nowadays communicable diseases spread very quickly, without respecting state borders and the living standards in the state. One of the most significant preconditions for ensuring high quality and sustainable health care is supervision and control of antimicrobial resistance.

The health care system does not have sufficient financial support from the State, as well as there is a high level of direct payments of patients, and it has a significant impact on

access to health care. The health care system solves neglected health problems because patients do not always have the possibility to find a doctor in due time.

The overarching objective of the public health policy is to increase the number of healthy life years of inhabitants of Latvia and to prevent premature death, preserving, improving and restoring health.

The tasks to be carried out until 2020:

- to increase the number of healthy life years by three years (to reach 57 years for men and 60 years for women in 2020);
- to reduce the indicator of potential years of life lost by 11% (up to 64 years of age) (to achieve 5 300 per 100 000 inhabitants in 2020).

The following sub-objectives have been brought forward for achieving the overarching objective of the policy:

1. To prevent inequality in the field of health by taking measures in order to ensure equal health promotion and health care opportunities for inhabitants of Latvia.
2. To reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by reducing the negative impact of risk factors on health.
3. To improve the health of a mother, father and child, to reduce infant mortality.
4. To promote healthy and safe life and working environment, to reduce injuries and mortality from external causes of death.
5. To reduce morbidity of inhabitants from communicable diseases.
6. To ensure efficient management of the health care system and rational utilisation of resources in order to improve the sustainability of operation of the health care system and equal access for all inhabitants of Latvia to good quality health care services, which are funded from the State budget resources.

Main action directions for achievement of the objective brought forward are as follows:

- provision of partnership and intersectoral co-operation, promoting equal health opportunities for all inhabitants;
- reduction of the spread of non-communicable disease risk factors;
- health improvement of pregnant women and children;
- reduction of injuries and the impact of environmental risks on the public health;
- prevention of communicable diseases;
- establishment of a high quality, safe and sustainable system of health care services (including reduction of patient contributions, reducing of queues to planned services, increase of work remuneration for employees of the health care sector, access to medicinal products for patients), ensuring equal access to services for all inhabitants of Latvia.

Additional budget resources are necessary for implementation of the measures provided for in the Guidelines (in comparison to 2014) in 2015 – 105 666 thous. euros, in 2016 – 209 367 thous. euros, in 2017 – 377 225 thous. euros, in 2018 – 542 494 thous. euros, in 2019 – 612 334 thous. euros, and in 2020 – 680 910 thous. euros, including:

– to the Ministry of Health in 2015 – 105 666 thous. euros, in 2016 – 204 628 thous. euros, in 2017 – 367 855 thous. euros, in 2018 – 528 605 thous. euros, in 2019 – 598 445 thous. euros, and in 2020 – 667 021 thous. euros;

– to the Ministry of Education and Science in 2016 – 4 739 thous. euros, in 2017 – 9 370 thous. euros, in 2018 and each year afterwards – 13 889 thous. euros.

¹ The study conducted by the University of Latvia “Performance of Evaluation for the Drawing up of the Public Health Policy Guidelines 2014-2020” was used for preparation of the Guidelines.

Minister for Finance

Andris Vilks