

Russia's Health Ministry Hopes to Provide More HIV Patients with Treatment

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Russia's Health Ministry will centralize the procurement of HIV medications in 2017 in order to provide more patients with treatment, the TASS news agency [reported](#) Wednesday, citing Deputy Minister Sergei Krayevoi.

The list of medications that need to be procured is currently being compiled with the help of the regional authorities who have been in charge of procurement since 2013. Decentralization of the process resulted in constant shortages of medications in many Russian regions. Re-centralizing procurement should help provide more HIV patients with medications, Krayevoi said.

Read more coverage of HIV medication shortages:

[Russia's HIV Patients Struggle to Get Treatment](#)

The production of anti-retroviral medications in Russia is another measure that is supposed to increase the number of HIV patients on treatment. According to Krayevoi, there are already 16 enterprises in Russia that are producing the drugs. “It allowed us to make the price of most medications two times lower,” the official said.

New cases of HIV in Russia have been on the rise since the late 1990s, according to statistics from the Moscow-based Federal Center for Fighting AIDS. The number of cases of HIV registered in Russia reached one million in December 2015. UNAIDS has reported that Russia has the largest HIV epidemic in the European region, and one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics in the world.

Read more coverage of the HIV epidemic in Russia:
[Russia Wishes Away Its HIV Epidemic](#)

Currently, there are more than 854,000 people in Russia living with an HIV diagnosis. Only 261,000 of them are receiving anti-retroviral treatment due to limited funds. Last week, Russia's Health Ministry announced that it would cut the budget allocated for procuring HIV medications in 2017 by 13.5 percent — from the 20.8 billion rubles (\$320 million) allotted in 2016 to 18 billion rubles (\$277 million), the RBC news website reported.

As a result of the cuts, the newest HIV medications, recommended by the World Health Organization, haven't made the government's list of essential medicines that helps regulate the prices on drugs and is used for state procurement procedures. “Macroeconomic measures” are to blame for this, the Ministry's medicines department head, Yelena Maksimkina, said.

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