The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Health Officials Use TikTok to Boost HIV Awareness

February 20, 2020



More than 1 million people in Russia live with HIV and a record 37,000 people died from HIV-related illnesses there in 2019. **Dmitry Yermakov / Moskva News Agency**

TikTok is best known as the app that launched a thousand memes and viral challenges.

But health officials in southern Russia now plan to spread awareness about the country's HIV crisis using the popular video-sharing platform, the Open Media news website reported Wednesday, citing public procurement files.

Related article: Google Searches for HIV Tests Soar by 5,000% After Russian Blogger's Doc

The initiative follows the release of popular journalist Yury Dud's documentary on Russia's HIV epidemic. The documentary has racked up over 14 million views since it was released on Feb. 11. Requests for HIV tests have also skyrocketed across Russia since the video went live.

The Rostov region's Health Ministry is seeking an individual to produce video content for its

TikTok account that depicts the realities of living with HIV.

Videos can range from 15 to 60 seconds, the procurement order says, and should make use of "special effects, graphics and musical or vocal accompaniment."

"The point of these videos is to give information about HIV in professional yet accessible language, and to describe the discrimination and stigma that HIV-positive people face," the project's mission statement says.

Related article: How TikTok Is Bringing Russia's Youth Closer to the West

While regional Health Ministry confirmed its role in the project to Open Media, it said that the project was mainly developed developed by the regional center for AIDS prevention and control, which will coordinate and vet most of the video content.

"Without the approval of the AIDS Center, no material will be aired," the center's deputy head physician Elena Sklyanaya told Open Media.

Sklyanya added that the project's development "had nothing to do with" Dud's documentary.

More than 1 million people in Russia live with HIV and a record 37,000 people died from HIV-related illnesses there in 2019.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/02/20/russian-health-officials-use-tiktok-to-boost-hiv-awareness-a69371