

# Public Health Workforce Development Experience of the Country of Georgia



**Elene Godziashvili**

**Head of Continuous Professional  
Training and Development Division**



NATIONAL CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

**Ministry of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Protection**



**Multisectoral Supervisory Board**



**National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC)**



61 Municipal Public Health Centers

R.Lugar Center for Public Health Research  
State-of Art Facility  
Laboratory Network

# Major Functional Directions

Communicable  
Diseases

Non-  
Communicable  
Diseases

Laboratory

Public Health Threats  
Preparedness and  
Response

Medical Statistics

PH State Programs  
and Regional  
Management

Environmental  
Health

Quality Control

Continuous  
Professional  
Development

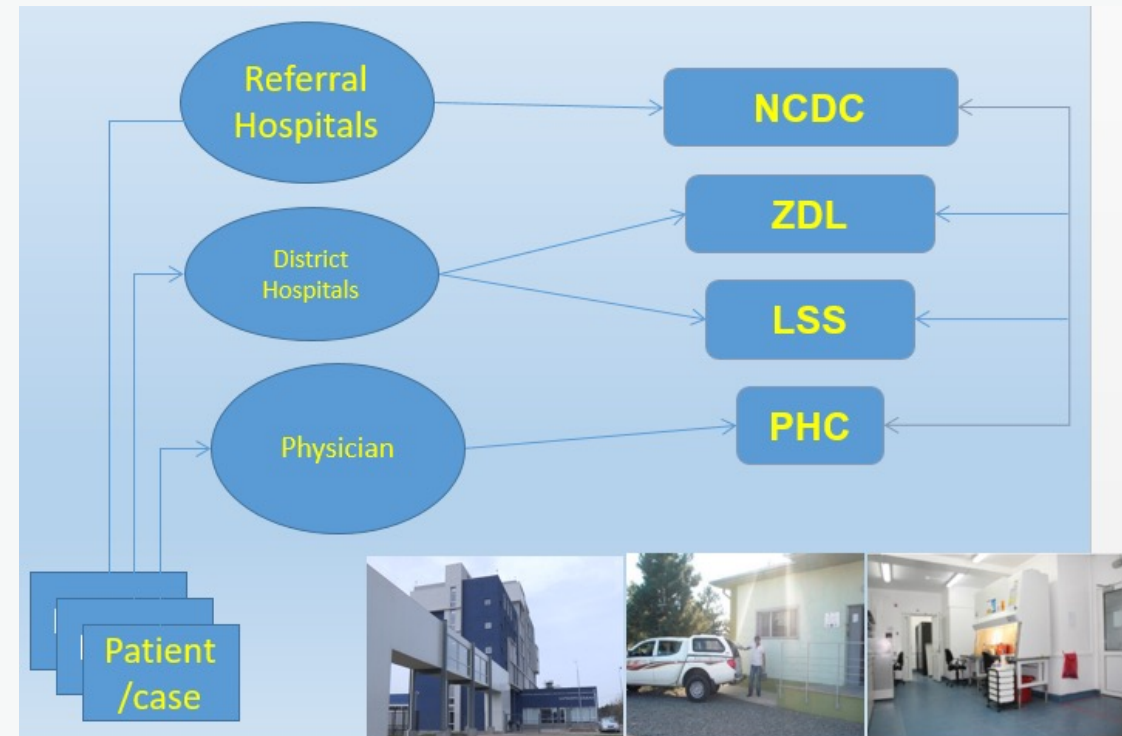
Partnership



# Overview of the Public Health System

## Under the General Mandate:

- Epidemiological surveillance, assessment of the status of health of the population, including fulfillment of obligations under state programs
- Early detection and prevention of diseases; Monitoring and immediate response to health risk factors during emergencies; coordination with central structures
- Promoting the environment, labor, drinking water, and food safety
- Strengthening the health by exerting influence on inequality and social determinants
- Organizing and leading health and well-being issues for the population, community members, and individual vulnerable groups
- Organizational-structural improvement of public health, achieving adequate funding and ensuring access to public health services and products
- Health promotion, improving communication among the population, promoting social mobilization when needed
- Conduct research for evidence-based health policy and practices



- **Develop, motivate, and maintain professional human resources**

## Gaps Revealed during the COVID-19 Pandemic in terms of Public Health Workforce

Mainly Soviet education  
among the existing  
public health workers  
(focused on municipal  
levels)

Deficiency in  
recruitment of new  
generation / specialists

Inconsistent trainings

Limited access to  
modern educational  
resources

Absence of internal  
credit system

Absence of mandatory  
CME / CPD system in  
the country.

# Employed Public Health Human Resources on National and Sub-Nationals Levels 2021-2022

- **National Level:**
  - At the central level (NCDC): 75 epidemiologists, 55 public health specialists, and 79 lab workers
- **Regional Level:**
  - 11 Regions (including Tbilisi Municipality)
- **Subregional Level:**
  - 64 Public Health Municipal Centers
  - Approximately **1,300** employees in regional PHCs specialized in the following disciplines (physicians, epidemiologists / preventive medicine doctors, lab specialists (entomologists, bacteriologists), dentists, nurses, statisticians, etc.)
    - including **228** epidemiologists/preventive medicine doctors/public health specialists

# Needs for Workforce Development in Compliance with Global Approaches and Trends



- Public Health Workforce Development: Receiving improved outcomes of healthcare services through continuous training, development of skills, and increase of productivity among employed cadres;



- A well-trained public health worker as the basis of a healthy community;



- World Health Organization: Development of public health workers is placed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of WHO Sustainment of Development Goals SDGs (WHO, 2021);



- Global Strategy on Human Resources: All aspects are to be considered in regard to public health workers' development by 2030 – planning of organizational structure, management, professional training and development, promotion, multisectoral approaches, etc. (WHO, 2021);

The role of a public health worker during the COVID-19 pandemic was particularly appraised and recognized as a frontline fighting profession by the world's leading healthcare organizations.

## Continued

- **Professional Training / Quality of Competencies**
  - To ensure the human resources with continuous professional education/trainings
- **Expand standards of services**
  - To improve the working functions/obligations and response to them
- **Increase the role of the PH workers on a national level and create the relevant organizational structures and capacities**
  - To create the relevant competencies, leadership, and impact on the community

*(CDC,  
2021)*



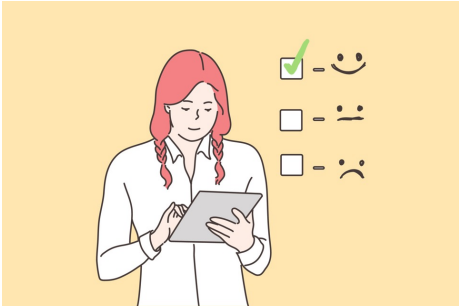
# Legislation Regulating the Public Health Workforce in the Country



- **Law of Georgia on Healthcare (10/12/1997)**
- **Law of Georgia on Public Health (27/06/2007) (Article 39)**

# Actions Taken Since 2022

- Identification of main actors
- Engagement of all stakeholders
- Conduction of overall assessment of existing workforce
- Creation of policy frame



# Situation Analysis: Comprehensive Survey (2023)

## ❑ Production of public health workforce

- Stock and distribution of current workforce of Georgia
- Public health worker density of Georgia in comparison to other countries
- Supply of workforce from university
- Characteristics of university programs

## ❑ Characteristics of existing workforce

- Sex
- Age
- Date of hire
- Education qualifications
- Trainings received
- Roles performed by existing workforce
- Employee satisfaction and job motivation
- Reasons for staying in current position
- Performance review and promotion

# Additional Sources for Analysis (2023)



Review of routine human resource information systems (HRIS)



Survey of university training programs in public health

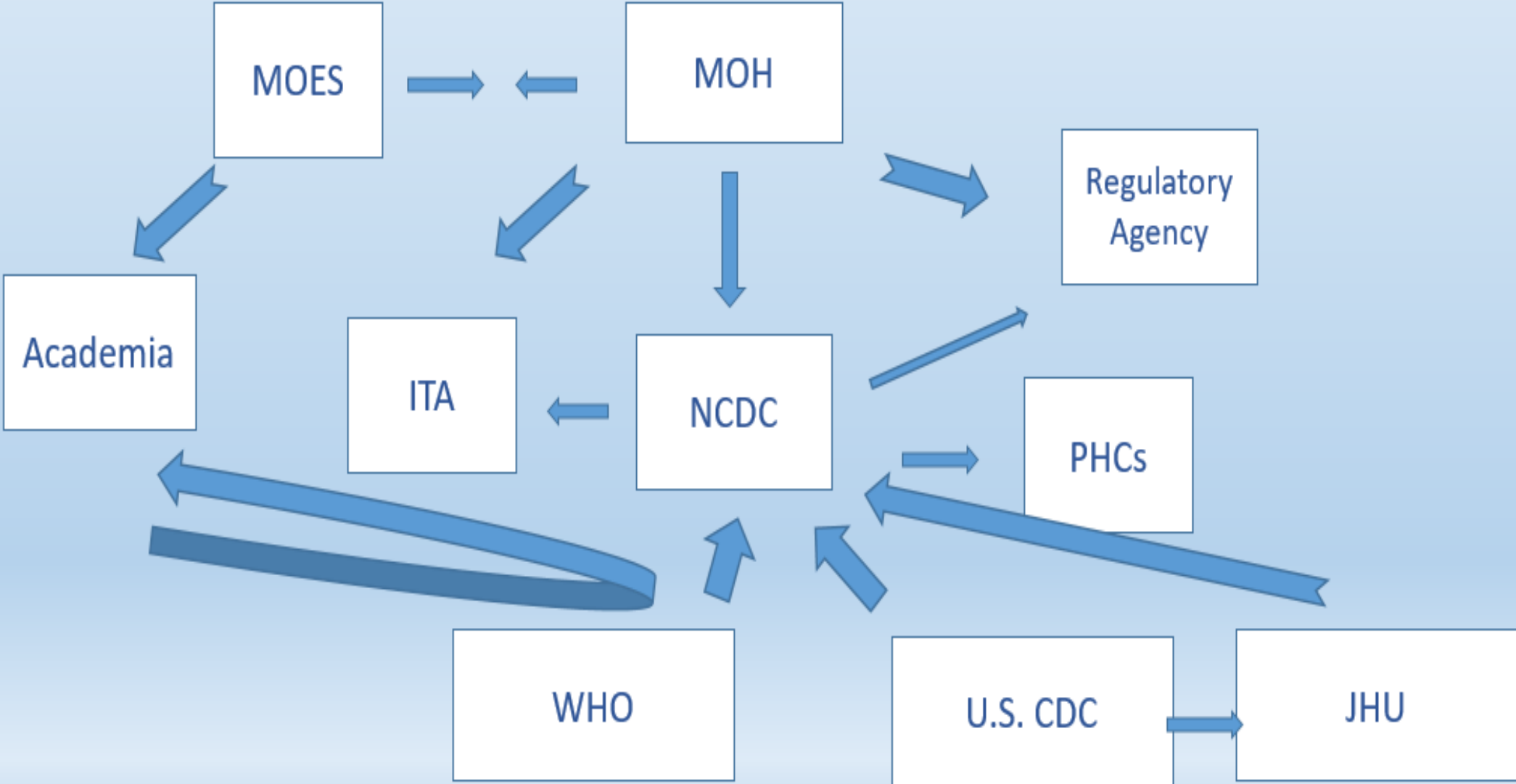


Review of national regulations and national recommendations, internal documents



Information on recent continuous professional development training from NCDC

# Multi-Sectoral Policy Board for Public Health Workforce



# Summary of Situation Analysis (2023)

Public health workforce faces significant challenges

Both NCDC and municipal public health centers have aging workforce. The mean age of public health employees in NCDC is 49 years and the mean age of public health employees in municipal or autonomous republic public health centers is 54 years.

Georgia has robust university sector with extensive offering of public health degrees.

- Need strengthening and standardization of programs and creating a pathway for aligning education to national public health needs

Public health sector unable to attract young and fresh graduates, esp. at the municipal centers.

Low salaries and lack of career pathways are likely challenges that need to be addressed to attract young graduates.

# Strategic Objectives To Be Implemented in 2024 - 2028 (Based on the National Strategy on PH Workforce Development)

Optimize the size, composition, and distribution of the public health workforce to address emerging capabilities and efficiency requirements.

Ensure the public health system can attract a young, skilled, and high-performing workforce.

Improve the quality and relevance of public health education in Georgia.

Develop and implement a public health certification program.

Promote continuous professional development (CPD) as a core element of public health workforce development to strengthen skills and performance.

Improve public health workforce performance through strengthened recruitment and performance management systems.

Strengthen organizational arrangements and use data and evidence for public health workforce planning and governance.

Strengthen partnerships and broader awareness and engagement of the public and key stakeholders in public health in Georgia.

# Main Pillars To Be Focused

- Strengthening Continuous Training System and Education Needs
- Performance and Retention
- Policy, Coordination, and Planning



# Next Plans and Joint Activities

**In collaboration with the U.S. CDC the NCDC is planning:**

**Policy and regulatory frameworks**

**Consistency and systematization of current training activities**

**Performance and motivation**

**Laboratory and hospital staff training needs**

**Data analysis and use is cross-cutting for all technical areas**

- **System + workforce (including quantity and competencies)**
- **Regional level workforce**

## Strategic Priorities



Strengthen the professional relationships within IANPHI's unique global forum



Harness the collective expertise of members to develop public health capacity globally



Engage, support and grow IANPHI's diverse and unified membership base



Advocate globally and at country level for NPHIS as key public health actors

- NCDC became a member of the IANPHI Public Health Professional Development Committee Member (Dec 2023)
- NCDC is planning to expand cooperation with European Network Members in terms of institutional Capacity strengthening

# Acknowledgements



## Special Thanks To:

- **Dr. Amiran Gamkrelidze – Former Director General (NCDG), Professor of the University of Georgia, Global Health Expert**
- **Dr. Tamar Gabunia – First Deputy Minister of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Protection**
- **Dr. Tushar Singh – Country Director for Georgia and Regional Workforce Development Advisor, U.S. CDC**
- **Dr. Sara Bennett – Director and Professor Health Systems Program Department of International Health, Bloomberg School of Public Health**

**Thank you for attention!**