

Improving TD vaccination in Croatia through direct GP outreach

Low TD (Tetanus–Diphtheria) vaccination rates among 60-year-olds, with only about one in three people vaccinated in 2024, highlighted the need for a targeted approach. A key barrier identified by the Croatian Institute of Public Health (CIPH) was the absence of a direct, systematic communication channel with General Practitioners (GPs), which limited awareness and routine prompting in primary care.

To bridge this gap, Croatian health authorities launched a pilot initiative under the EU-funded ‘Overcoming Obstacles to Vaccination’ project. The pilot aimed to strengthen communication channels by sending reminder messages directly to GPs through an online platform they use daily. In total, messages were delivered to 585 GP offices across the country.

The initiative was made possible through collaboration with key partners, including the Croatian Institute of Public Health, the GP platform provider (MCS), local Public Health Institutes, and the Ministry of Health.

Driving uptake through direct, timely GP communication

The pilot demonstrated that targeted communication can significantly improve vaccination uptake. Among the intervention group, TD vaccination coverage increased by 1.17%. The reminder messages achieved high engagement, with 57% of GPs opening them, leading to 803 vaccines administered in the target group.

Beyond immediate results, the ‘Overcoming Obstacles to Vaccination’ project enabled authorities to establish a dedicated communication channel within the national citizen platform for future vaccination campaigns. Peer learning activities across countries, including other pilot programs, helped to navigate legal considerations for direct outreach to citizens for vaccination campaigns. The flexible design of the pilot allowed for its rapid adaptation to regulatory requirements. Importantly, the work helped catalyse a national legislative reform process to permit direct communication with citizens in future health campaigns.

The pilot’s success highlights the potential for replication in other regions facing similar challenges. By leveraging existing communication channels with GPs and citizens, this approach offers a flexible, cost-effective way to improve vaccination coverage and public health communication.

Overcoming Obstacles to Vaccination across the EU

“Overcoming Obstacles to Vaccination” is a three-year EU-funded project that aims to boost vaccination coverage by tackling physical, practical, and administrative barriers to seven key vaccines, including COVID-19, HPV (Human Papillomavirus), and MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella). The project identified effective practices across EU Member States, piloted them in



**Overcoming
Obstacles**
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countries facing similar challenges, and developed tailored recommendations for policymakers, health authorities, professionals, and citizens.