

# Baylor Black Sea Foundation

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Annual Report 2020



## Key Info

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Tiberiu Csaki, Michael Mizwa, Simona Ruță, Anda Șerban, Gabriel Băzdrăgan

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** Ana-Maria SCHWEITZER

**CONSTANȚA:**

The 10 Prelungirea Liliacului St. The HIV and Viral Hepatitis B and C Voluntary Testing Center, Clinical Hospital, office 243, 143 Tomis Ave.

**TULCEA:**

The HIV and Viral Hepatitis B and C Voluntary Testing Center, County Hospital, Communicable Disease Department, 32 1848 St.

**VISION**

Baylor Black Sea Foundation's vision is to live in a discrimination-free community that's capable of stopping communicable and chronic diseases.

**MISSION**

Baylor Black Sea Foundation's mission is to help the community develop effective services for the prevention and care of infectious and chronic diseases. Currently, Baylor Black Sea Foundation's status is that of a public utility organization. Baylor Foundation

Romania provides prevention, treatment, and care for people affected by infectious and chronic diseases, namely viral hepatitis, HIV infection, and diabetes.

**WHERE WE WORK**

Baylor Black Sea Foundation provides complex services at the Clinical Center of Excellence in Constanța and operates three counseling and testing centers in the Dobrogea region, as well as a mobile voluntary testing laboratory. Over the years, Baylor Black Sea Foundation has provided free-of-charge testing and counseling for more than 83,000 people, long-term medical and psycho-social care for over 4,000 patients with HIV and hepatitis and supported the healthcare system with donations of medicines as well as professional training courses for specialists.

**OUR HISTORY**

The Center for HIV Clinical Excellence or the Romanian American Children's Center was founded on April 6, 2001, and the Baylor Black Sea Foundation was legally established in 2004. The

Clinical Center of Excellence was created by Dr. Mark Kline to help the HIV-infected children he met during his first visit in Romania in the late '90s. At the time of its establishment, the center was the largest pediatric clinic in Europe to provide care and treatment for HIV-infected children.

Baylor Foundation Romania is part of a network headquartered in Houston, Texas, at the Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital. Founded as Baylor College of Medicine International Pediatrics AIDS Initiative, BIPAI at Texas Children's Hospital is the largest care and treatment network based at an academic institution supporting programs for children living with HIV. BIPAI Headquarters and its network of nine affiliated, independent foundations together provide pediatric and maternal healthcare for vulnerable populations around the world.

### THE HEADQUARTERS: HOUSTON, TEXAS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### THE FOUNDATIONS IN THE BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE INTERNATIONAL PEDIATRIC AIDS INITIATIVE AT TEXAS CHILDRENS HOSPITAL (BIPAI) NETWORK:

- Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation - Argentina
- Baylor Children's Clinical Centre of Excellence Trust - Botswana
- Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation - Colombia
- Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation - Eswatini
- Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation - Lesotho
- Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation - Malawi
- Baylor-Black Sea Foundation - Romania
- Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation - Tanzania
- Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation - Uganda

## EXCERPT OF THE LETTER OF MICHAEL MIZWA, BIPAI CEO



„Over the past 20 years, Baylor College of Medicine International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) has provided technical assistance to our independent NGO implementing partners in an effort to help bolster their proficiency at managing and leading large and complex projects. Their ability to be leaders in this space has allowed our partners to be competitive for funding from entities including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In my new role as CEO, I am extremely proud of the accomplishments BIPAI achieved in its first 20 years and the progress the organization has made to continue to carry out its mission of providing high-quality

pediatric and family centered healthcare, health professional training and clinical research, focused on conditions impacting the health and well-being of children and families worldwide.

BIPAI is committed to its vision and mission and the people it serves despite the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and/or any other issues the future might bring. We have a strong foundation and a team of dedicated experts willing to care for those in need and to support and train others to do the same.

I am grateful to all of you who have helped make this year a success and look forward to another year of successful growth, expansion and relationship building.”

Sincerely,  
Michael Mizwa  
Chief Executive Officer





## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BAYLOR BLACK SEA FOUNDATION

Dear reader,

### 2020 was our resilience test.

We did not know last March how we would navigate the difficult pandemic and post-pandemic period without affecting the approximately 10,000 people who access each year our voluntary HIV and hepatitis screening services or the medical and psychosocial services for people living with these chronic infections. It was a test that showed us the value of previously built partnerships. Our partners reacted quickly and provided us support to solve the two most urgent problems: ensuring the care of patients with chronic diseases during the pandemic and mitigating the negative effects that the pandemic could have directly on our organization.

However, we have not been able to reach the same operations' indicators registered in previous years. If we usually test between eight and ten thousand people annually, in 2020 had access to testing approximately 5,600 people; we also registered significant drop in the number of new HIV cases detected by our team and by 60% of the number of people who did not know the diagnosis of hepatitis C, compared with 2019. This means that, in this pandemic year, many people affected by HIV and viral hepatitis did not receive the necessary medical care, not knowing their diagnosis. However, we managed to maintain intense contact with all patients with chronic diseases that we assist, reaching similar level as during the previous year. From this point of view, 2020 tested our tenacity and capacity for innovation.

The fire belt of the state of emergency required us to act quickly in three directions: telemedicine and teleconsultation, the sanitary reorganization of the entire activity, and the development of specific communication content to inform patients and the community about COVID-19.

Remote services have proven their value for the safety of staff and patients. In March, we announced the community counting on our services that, despite the state of emergency, they can stay in touch with us and continue to receive services. We launched on March 27 the telemedicine and teleconsultation service for people living with or affected by HIV, as well as for

hepatitis patients who have requested long-term care at Baylor Black Sea Foundation; this solution has ensured continuity in the delivery of our services. The coronavirus pandemic challenged us to implement new services to our offer earlier than planned.

The circuits were adapted to suit the new sanitary context. Before resuming activities at the Center of Excellence, the moment the state of emergency ended, we examined the roles and responsibilities of each team member. Clear rules have been developed for staff and patients to mitigate the risk of infection with the new coronavirus.

We assessed a wide range of solutions before choosing the right ones for patients, for our team, for the spaces and facilities we have. There have been implemented specific sanitary and triage sets of measures, depending on the characteristics of each medical specialty: dental care, pneumology, obstetrics/gynecology, dermatology, family medicine, voluntary testing and counseling.

We kept the Foundation's team complete. It consists, for the most part of it, of professionals with extensive clinical experience and skills in helping patients living with infections and other chronic diseases. Since March 2020, we have been focusing more on our women employees as many of our colleagues are "juggling" work, caring for children and their education at home, and other household chores. As we know well that most of our colleagues take over the "lion's share" of family responsibilities, we tried there were possible, to make the work schedule more flexible or allow them to work from home when they needed it. Our care immediately in the good results of their work, resulting in increased involvement and attachment to the organization.

We are very happy to see how our patients work closely with us: it's also true we provide long term care to people who have been receiving our services for many years, an educated and informed group in regards of the need to follow the recommendations because they have proved useful over time.

In a context as constraining as that of 2020, we aimed, without deviating from the founding principles, to offer patients the best possible experience. We will continue our "journey" aiming to continuously improve the processes for our patients, for a healthier community and to provide employees with real opportunities to achieve maximum levels of competence and attachment.

**Ana-Maria Schweitzer**  
Executive Director



## Financial Management



Baylor Black Sea Foundation needs strong partners to achieve its goals. Moreover, our partnerships are strong. We make no secret that the trust of our contractual partners is ensured by the transparency with which we communicate the results we obtain.

2020 has brought global instability and changed priorities. Our partnerships have allowed us not to become vulnerable: we have been able to resume our work, to provide medical services both within the Clinical Center of Excellence and outside, in the field, with the support of mobile complex teams, ensuring the safety of both staff and beneficiaries of our services.

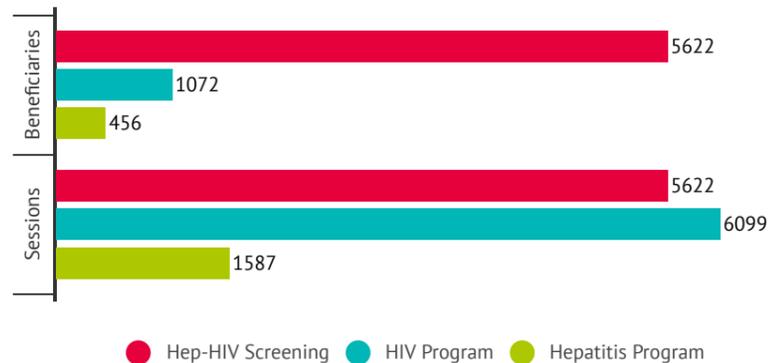
“Our collaboration with partners who share the same ethical principles has allowed us, in the context of the pandemic that marked most of 2020, to be able to provide quality services safely, providing the necessary resources for our patients and team members, diminishing the exposure risk to the new coronavirus.

The sums attracted by our organization and invested in Baylor Foundation Romania’s health programs allowed not only the continuous provision of medical and psychosocial services to patients with chronic diseases during the pandemic, but also the mitigation of the negative effects the pandemic could directly inflict on our organization.” - Monica Frangeti, Financial Manager

## The Way We Helped the Community in 2020



**Total expenses: USD 810 682**  
= LEI 3 440 533



## Funds Raised in 2020

	2 807 106 lei
	126 944 lei
	829 094 lei
Companii și persoane fizice	383 997 lei
	50 000 lei
	44 406 lei
	22 795 lei
2% & 3.5% Redirecționare impozit pe venit	10 852 lei
	35 000 lei

Telemuncă, OG 132, art. 6

In Kind Donations



We would like to thank to both persons and private businesses who donated 2% of the income tax, respectively 20% of the profit tax to Baylor Black Sea Foundation.

Donate today!

Baylor Black Sea Foundation

Fiscal code: 16810410

IBAN bank account: **RO34 UGBI 0000 0320 1470 2RON**

Garanti Bank Constanța

Garanti Bank clients can donate to Baylor Black Sea Foundation directly through their online account (Payments/NGO donations)

Here's how you can help:

-  **Donate 50 LEI**  
ensure one person may be tested for HIV, Hepatitis B & C
-  **Donate 80 LEI**  
2 hours of personalized practical support for one patient with hepatitis
-  **Donate 110 LEI**  
one psychological counseling session for a PLWHA
-  **Donate 200 LEI**  
1 month of formula milk for an HIV exposed infant
-  **Donate 400 LEI**  
one medical consultation to a specialist doctor for one PLWHA

## BAYLOR BLACK SEA FOUNDATION IN TRANSPARENCY

“Donating Health” Since 2001

### A Baylor Black Sea Founda- tion project in partnership with AmeriCares

The medicines donation project mobilized massive energies and resulted in consistent donations. This is another form in which our team constantly aids the national health system.

Over time, the donated medicines have reached dozens of medical institutions across the country. We made sure that medicines that are vital for stopping the evolution of serious diseases, such as antibiotics, antivirals, treatments for cardiovascular diseases reach those who need them most.



The medicines donated by the Baylor Black Sea Foundation are among those missing from hospitals, insufficient or inaccessible to patients due to high prices.

## Medicines Donations

	<b>\$ 1 338 545</b> 2020
	<b>\$ 2 763 288</b> 2019
	<b>\$ 1 712 260</b> 2017
	<b>\$ 3 878 954</b> 2016
	<b>\$ 5 725 338</b> 2015
	<b>\$ 4 503 695</b> 2014
	<b>\$ 4 825 105</b> 2013
	<b>\$ 4 491 472</b> 2012
	<b>\$ 3 671 347</b> 2011
	<b>\$ 7 714 977</b> 2010
	<b>\$ 6 861 999</b> 2009
	<b>\$ 4 637 459</b> 2008
	<b>\$ 4 081 176</b> 2007
	<b>\$ 4 640 334</b> 2006
	<b>\$ 1 612 983</b> 2005
	<b>\$ 3 236 893</b> 2004
	<b>\$ 1 618 241</b> 2003
	<b>\$ 1 746 971</b> 2002
	<b>\$ 136 507</b> 2001
	<b>TOTAL USD</b>
	<b>62 335 538</b>

## Human Resources Management

Under the extreme pressure of the COVID-19 pandemic, we proved during 2020 that Baylor Black Sea Foundation is an effective organization, that we can react flexibly and quickly to the changing environment.

We continued to carefully assess the knowledge and skills of our team's members and to assign them in internal programs and activities that would allow to better showcase their individual qualities.

*"I believe that, after the long endurance test started in 2020 under the pressure of the pandemic, the professional team here, at Baylor Black Sea Foundation, has a sound future-oriented work culture. The resources we have, be they human, financial, material, are limited.*

*Therefore, the capacity for new projects and activities will come in the future from increased efficiency and good organization. We are a network organization, which allows us to develop skills by transferring knowledge quickly with our partners.*



*The network we belong to, the Baylor College of Medicine International AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) in Texas, has helped us develop the ability to overcome difficulties, maintain staff morale and productivity, and quickly resolve governance and regulatory issues."*  
- Cristina Marinescu, human resources specialist

## Professionalism as a lifestyle choice



37

Team Members of Baylor Foundation Romania attending training programs in 2020



5.79

Average trainings per person



220

LEI. average training costs

## The New Normal of Our Work

2020 has reshaped the world and added new questions and challenges, with unprecedented turmoil in times of peace. It is true that new perspectives have emerged from the constraints.



*"The last year was one of many challenges, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The entire Baylor Black Sea Foundation ecosystem, as we built it and as patients knew it, has been remodeled under the pressure of measures to reduce the risk of infection with the new coronavirus."*

- Ștefania Mihale, Manager, Medical Programs Development



*"We had to recruit in a pandemic: medical staff with excellent training in the field of infectious diseases, members of our team for many years, were attracted to COVID-19 front line hospitals, either temporarily, as volunteers or for indefinite duration. Recruiting served for replacement and growth and we continue to invest in training our new colleagues. We are glad that they also share the passion of the team! We remain committed to the belief that we must invest in the capacity and talent of our employees."*

- Cristina Marinescu, Human Resources Specialist



*"Our work places us in the first line in the fight against chronic infections transmitted through blood, and other chronic diseases. The Baylor Black Sea Foundation's team channels its efforts on multiple levels - medical and psychosocial services, fundraising, courses for medical staff interested in developing new skills and, medical communication."*

- Florentina Stoian, Process Controller

*"The services we offer suffer significant constraints due to the high costs of personal protective equipment for staff*

*and patients. More than ever, we apply robust and fair measures to control the spread of airborne infections in the clinic and advise patients on how they can protect themselves in their daily lives."* - Stela Rafta, Economist



*"In a world marked by COVID-19, personal and professional lives differ substantially from the 'normal' before. Therefore, we focus on counteracting the effects of the pandemic on the well-being of our colleagues. To succeed, we must start by acknowledging that we all feel overwhelmed: this is the result of the need to weigh*



*the consequences of every little decision that, before March 2020, was a regular part of our daily lives, whether we refer to attending work, carrying out all current activities enlisted in job descriptions, shopping, accompanying children to school or supervising them when attending online classes, meeting extended family members, friends or colleagues."*

- Ana-Maria Schweitzer, Executive Director

*"Now, making any of the decisions is difficult. In other words, it is not*



*only the frequency with which we make such decisions now, but the pandemic disrupts and destabilizes our lives. I can confirm the concern of the management team of Baylor Black Sea Foundation to channel a large part of the efforts to help reset the balance of our colleagues' personal lives. We need to do this because we run a clinic, counseling and voluntary testing centers, the health and safety of a large number of patients with infections and other chronic diseases, people that our team continues to monitor with professionalism and increased care."* - Mihaela Bogdan, Programs Manager

Sharing Knowledge

## Future Nurses Count on the Phlebotomy Courses Organized by Baylor Black Sea Foundation

The health crisis caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus affected the students of the health schools and the students of the medical faculties as well: they could no longer carry out the internships in hospitals their educational institutions partner with. Baylor Black Sea Foundation offered them a solution to improve their practical skills through one-on-one work sessions with experienced medical staff.

"NEW METHODS OF EDUCATION AND MEDICAL PRACTICE BASED ON SIMULATION ALLOW GAINING CORRECT MEDICAL SKILLS AND ATTITUDE. THAT'S WHY WE WILL CONTINUE THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FUTURE GENERATION OF NURSES. FROM THE MOMENT WHEN WE IDENTIFIED THE TRAINING NEED AND DEVELOPED THE TWO MODULES, THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL, THE SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENT WAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO SAY THAT WE HAVE FOUND SOLUTIONS TO BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT THE COURSE DURING THE PANDEMIC, WHICH ALLOWED THE "TRAINING" OF FUTURE MEDICAL STAFF IN A SPECIAL HEALTH CONTEXT. THE COMPLETE PHLEBOTOMY COURSE FACILITATES THE GAIN OF SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE, AND THESE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASING THE SAFETY OF THE MEDICAL ACT AND THE SAFETY OF THE PATIENTS."

We continued during 2020 to organize phlebotomy courses, answering this way to the interest of the students of the medical schools in mastering the right phlebotomy technique.



A team of two skilled professionals, Cristina Pătrașcu, GP with certified competencies in emergency medicine and Negivan Septar, head nurse, aims to further develop the course methodology and the material base. This way, they aim to

ensure that absolutely all participants in the course will become, from the first day at their new job, medical staff with thorough theoretical and practical training.

Baylor Black Sea Foundation continues to contribute to improving the general quality of medical care in Constanța County.

"The idea of the program came from a need felt directly by Baylor Black Sea Foundation: we found out how difficult it is to find specialists who master the phlebotomy technique when we wanted to recruit staff for our own testing centers. The solution found for the organization's own problems proved to be, in fact, the answer for a large number of future medical staff or people at the start line in their medical careers." - Maria Pătrașcu, GP with certified competencies in emergency medicine

"For the safe conduct of phlebotomy courses, we conducted online theoretical and assessment sessions, through a teleconference platform. Afterwards, we waited for the students at the headquarters of the Center of Excellence to go through the practical module, in groups of only two, up to four, based on a prior appointment. We made sure this way that we could control down the risk of infection with the new coronavirus." - Negivan Septar, Head Nurse

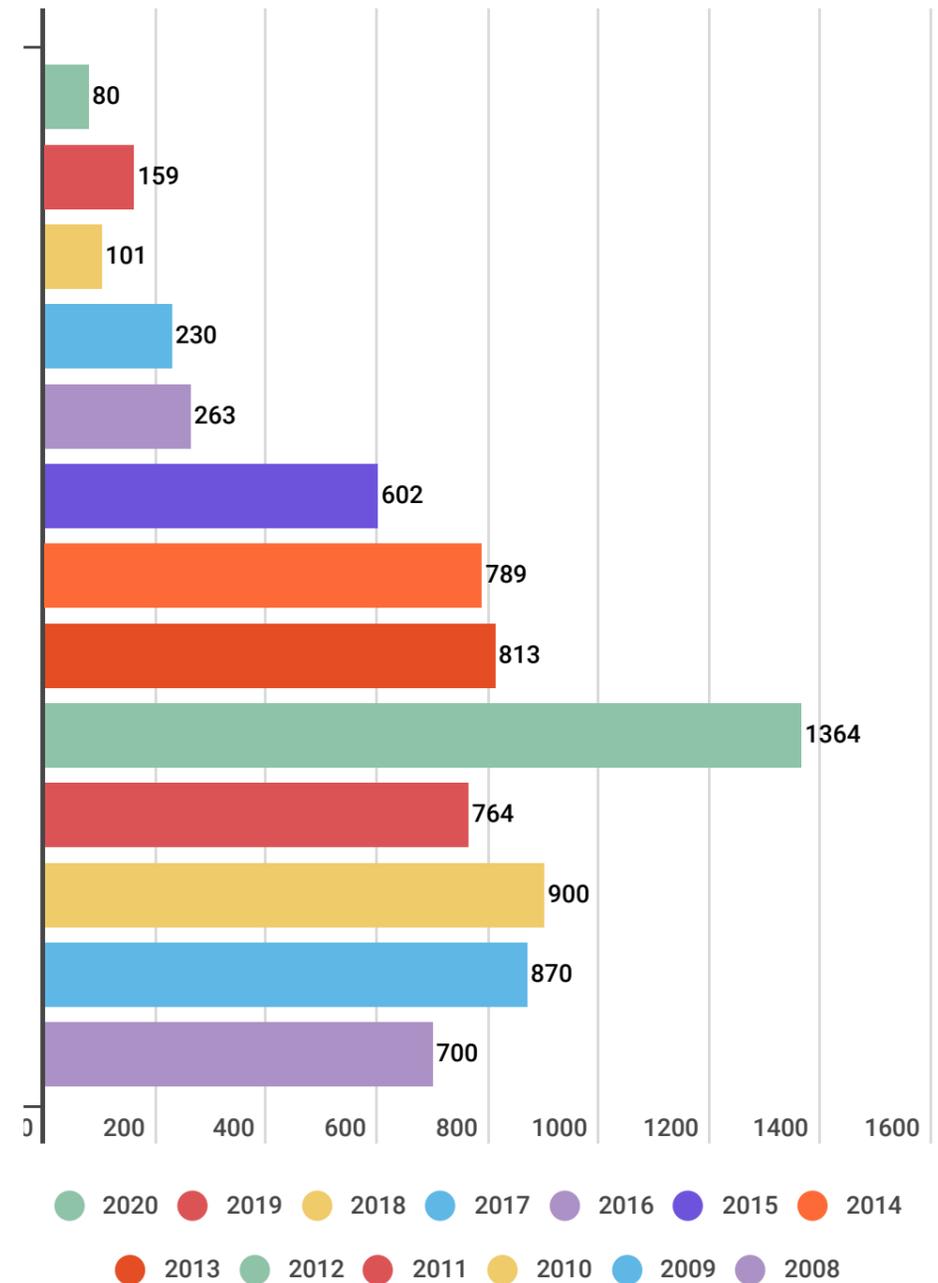
To learn the phlebotomy technique, students have access to the following equipment:

- Simulator for venous access – infants;
- Life-size venous access simulator – adult arm;
- Individual simulators for performing intravenous injections and blood transfusions (i.e. individual kits consisting of simulator pillows, fixed on the forearm).
- Deep veins visualizing device.



Sharing Knowledge

## The Contribution of Baylor Black Sea Foundation to the Professional Development of the Medical Staff



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

## Each 30 Minutes, Someone Finds Out His or Her HIV, HVB, HCV Status at Baylor Black Sea Foundation

"Carrying out an extensive program to diagnose HIV and hepatitis B and C viruses in a population of over one million people is a success. The partnership with health professionals has led to a steady increase in the number of people referred by family doctors or other specialists to our voluntary counseling and testing centers. But such a result can only be achieved through strategic partnerships with the funders of our programs. We are grateful for all the support Baylor continues to receive!" - Ana-Maria Schweitzer, Executive Director

Community health is a constantly changing landscape. The approach of our team is a complex one:

- Since 2007, we have been at the forefront of diagnosing the HIV infection.
- Since 2009, the voluntary counseling and testing program has been extended to viral hepatitis B and C.
- We focus our efforts with the same attention to improve the knowledge about the care that our patients need, we aim to develop a professional, trusting relationship with the people receiving long term care,
- We identify and share with our colleagues from other medical institutions key information on how specific activities can be improved.

The voluntary counseling and testing services address to a population exceeding 1 million inhabitants in the Dobrogea region. Baylor Black Sea Foundation considered that the integrated approach is very useful, offering counseling and testing for the three infections.

Pre- and post-test counseling sessions constantly lead to a knowledge increase in respect of the risks of infection and measures to prevent such an infection, also helping to determine the way in which a newly diagnosed person may have become infected.

"It is necessary for people to make out of the voluntary testing a current, timely practice of health assessment. Thus, those diagnosed can have access to treatment as close to the date of infection as possible, ensuring that the chances of successful health management are higher. We make sure

that those diagnosed find out that they can have access to long-term medical and psychosocial care services at Baylor Foundation Romania and that they can also receive from us navigation services in the public health services system. The modern screening program for viral hepatitis and HIV carried out in Constanța and Tulcea counties has made the Baylor Black Sea Foundation a reliable partner of the community and health professionals in the fight against blood-borne infections. We strive to reach out to all those in the general population who still have undiagnosed infections with hepatitis viruses, as well as to the members of high-risk groups." - Mihaela Bogdan, program director

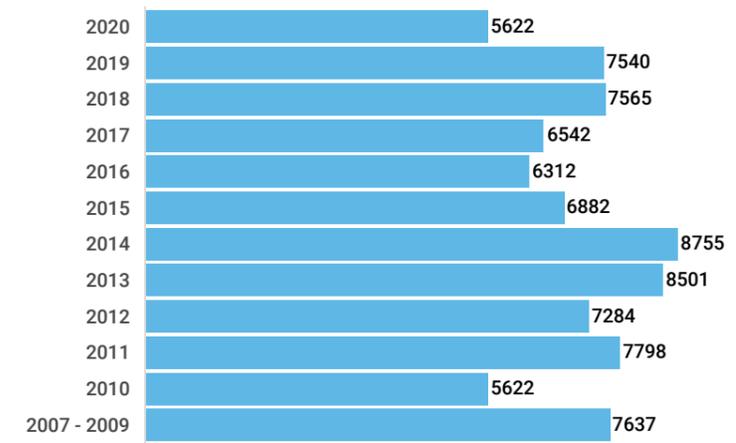
Baylor Black Sea Foundation has shown that it has the professional capacity to integrate the Hep-HIV screening service into a wider system: thus, we offer long-term care for newly diagnosed people both in Baylor Foundation Romania voluntary counseling and testing centers and other medical institutions. Currently, members of the medical community in Dobrogea rely on Baylor Foundation Romania services to ensure that their patients get the most out of the specialized care services they need for the chronic conditions they suffer from. Newly diagnosed individuals receive a disease assessment and personalized treatment, including non-invasive assessment of liver fibrosis and navigation services in the public health system. This "test and treat" strategy aims to increase the number of people tested, those diagnosed, causing a decrease in the prevalence of viral hepatitis and HIV and a reduction in the social burden of chronic infections in the Dobrogea region.



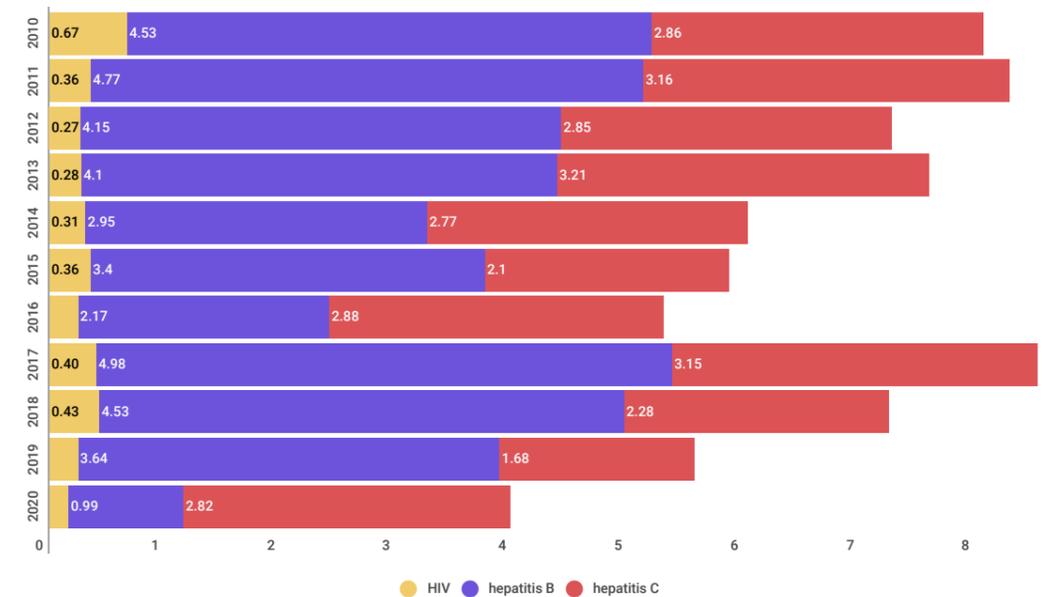
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Overall HIV, HVB and HVC Voluntary Tests Performed at Baylor Foundation Romania

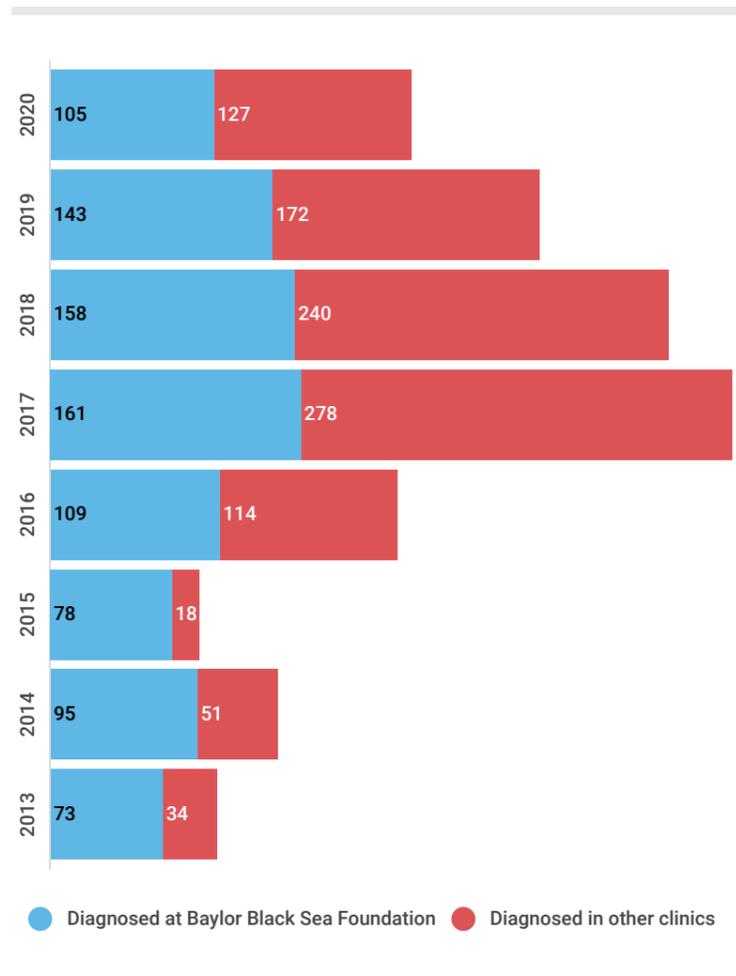
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HIV, HBV and HCV Prevalence Identified through the Voluntary Counseling and Testing Program at Baylor Black Sea Foundation



Patients Receiving Long Term Services at Baylor Black Sea Foundation:  
diagnosed at Baylor Foundation Romania/diagnosed in other clinics



## The Pandemic Should Not Delay the Diagnosis of other Serious Infections or Access to Treatment

### Advantageous Testing Conditions

Our screening program continues to respond to all testing requests until maximum capacity is reached: every 30 minutes, someone finds their status at the Foundation’s testing centers. The service remains free, voluntary, fast and confidential. Test teams provide identical pre- and post-test counseling services both at Baylor Black Sea Foundation’s centers and in the field. Baylor Foundation Romania makes sure this way that access to screening is provided in various communities: we’re present not only at our testing centers but in hospitals, universities, offices of companies that request our service, homes for the elderly and children, detention centers as well.

In 2020, at the end of the state of emergency, the testing program was resumed only after we made sure that it would run safely both for people who are being tested voluntarily or on the doctor’s recommendation and for the testing team. Thus, new rules have been established to reduce the risk of infection with the new coronavirus:

Thus, strict rules were communicated to the beneficiaries:

- scheduling time: any delay will result in the cancellation of the test and reschedule, depending on the available spots,
- waiver of companions: if their presence is not absolutely necessary (legal representative),
- strict control of the number of people in the waiting rooms at the same time,
- the correct wearing of personal protective equipment, mask and footwear, as well as the use of hand sanitizer, all of which are available free of charge at the entrances to the buildings or testing sites,

- strictly follow the instructions received from the staff of the center - receptionist, counselor, medical staff, etc., throughout the time spent in the center, in order to limit unnecessary exposure to risks,
- reducing the time spent in the office by completing the Hep-HIV risk assessment questionnaire in advance, the session being led by phone by the test counselor.

*“The current sanitary context put us, in May, in front of a challenge, namely that of reorganizing the testing activity, at the end of the state of emergency. Then, in May, we marked as we hope, the only interruption in the history of the voluntary and free-of-charge testing program that we run in the community; the program can be accessed by anyone who*

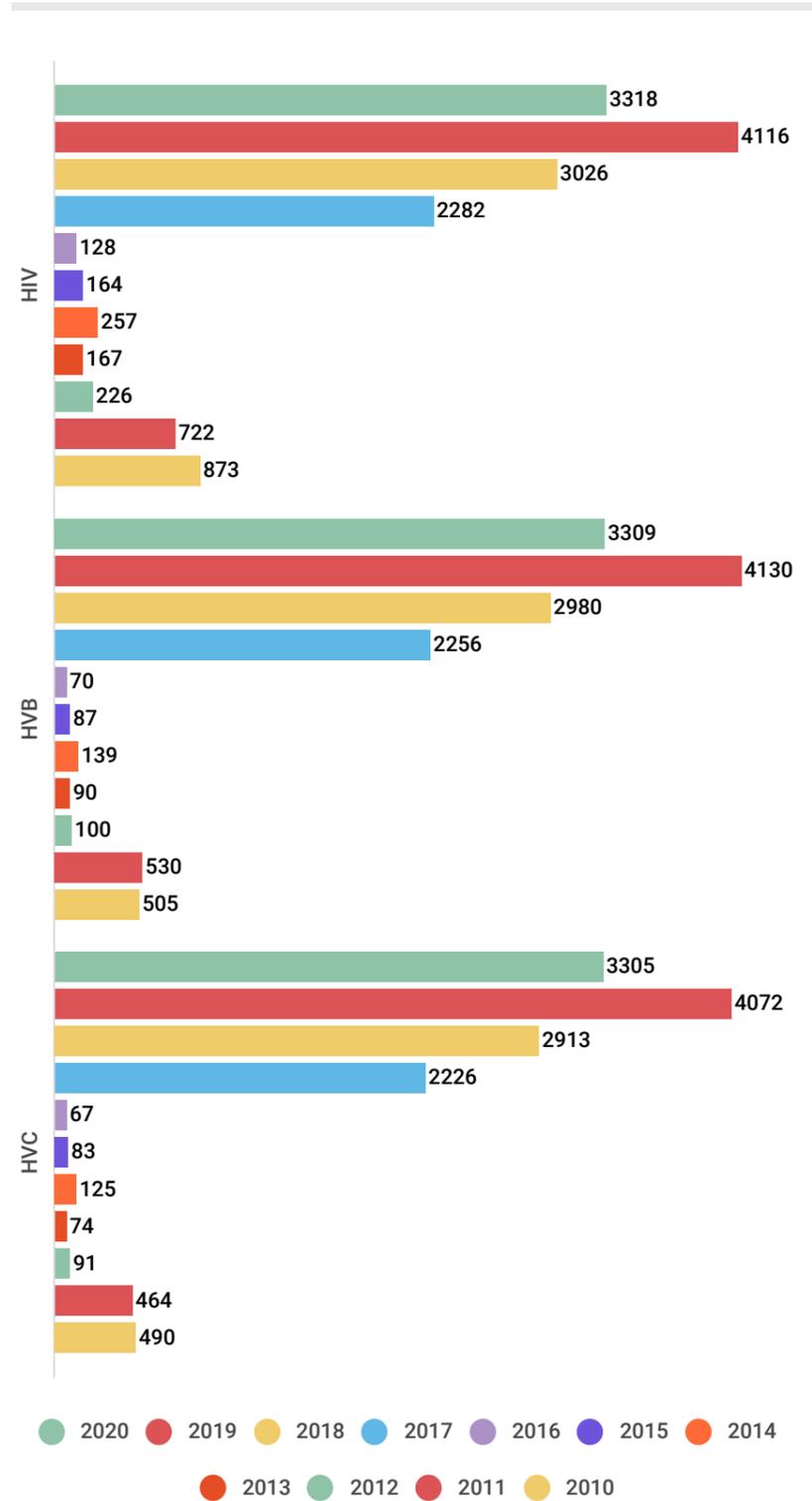
*wants to know their Hep-HIV status. Testing for HIV and viral hepatitis continues at Baylor Black Sea Foundation, with prior appointment, proceedings the service recipients are already accustomed to. We have*

*taken all measures to ensure the safety of staff and have established a set of rules to limit the transmission of COVID-19 to the beneficiaries of the HIV-Hep counseling and testing service. Recent data show that coordinated action is needed to encourage people not yet tested for Hep-HIV to schedule a test appointment and avoid having certain infections diagnosed late.” -*

*Iuliana Ciocea, Patient Navigator*

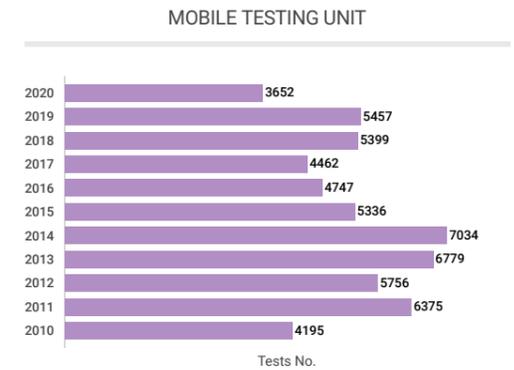


### People Tested for the 1<sup>st</sup> Time



### We Facilitate the Access of Vulnerable People to Testing/Diagnosis with the Help of the Mobile Laboratory

#### Voluntary Counseling and Testing for HIV and Viral Hepatitis B and C



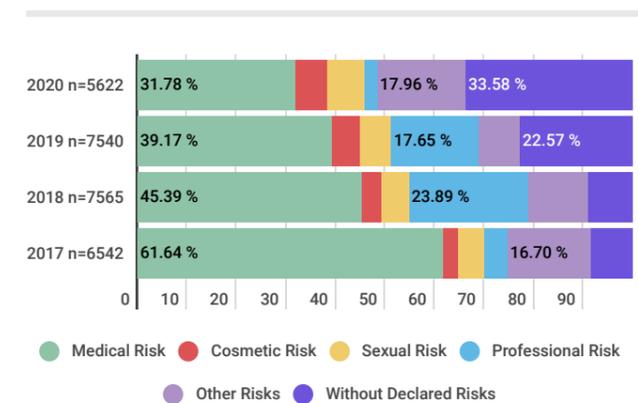
**Confidentiality is one of the values of the testing program and it allows the diagnosis of those infected, without affecting their social life.**

"I am very satisfied that I am involved in the outreach testing activity, with the mobile laboratory! In the context of the pandemic and with all the imposed restrictions, outreach testing provides the necessary answer to an extensive series of limitations such as: the travel ban, the increased risk of COVID-19 for the special categories we test, the limited access of the vulnerable people to Hep-HIV testing and, if diagnosed

with one of the infections, the delayed patients' access to treatment. We, practically, bring the solution where there is a greater need for it! We are rewarded by the high interest of all those we manage to reach out with this service: on a personal level, I am happy whenever I see objective information we provide meets a real need." - Iuliana Costaş, Testing Counsellor

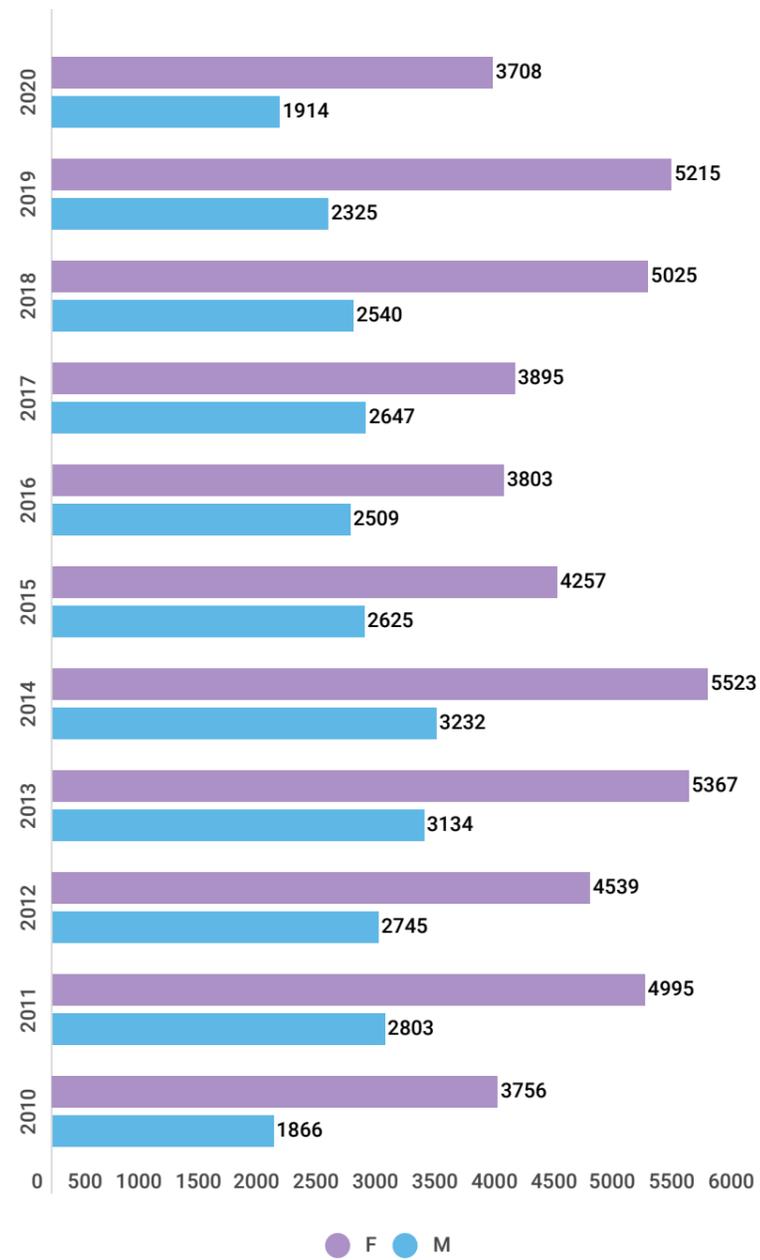


#### Risks Identified during the Counseling Sessions



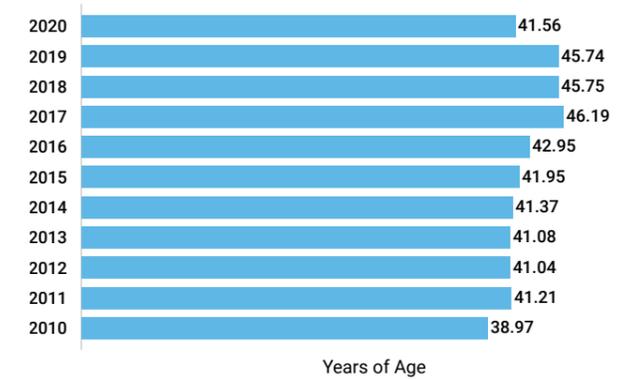
### Voluntary Counseling and testing for Hep-HIV - DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender Based Distribution of Tested Persons

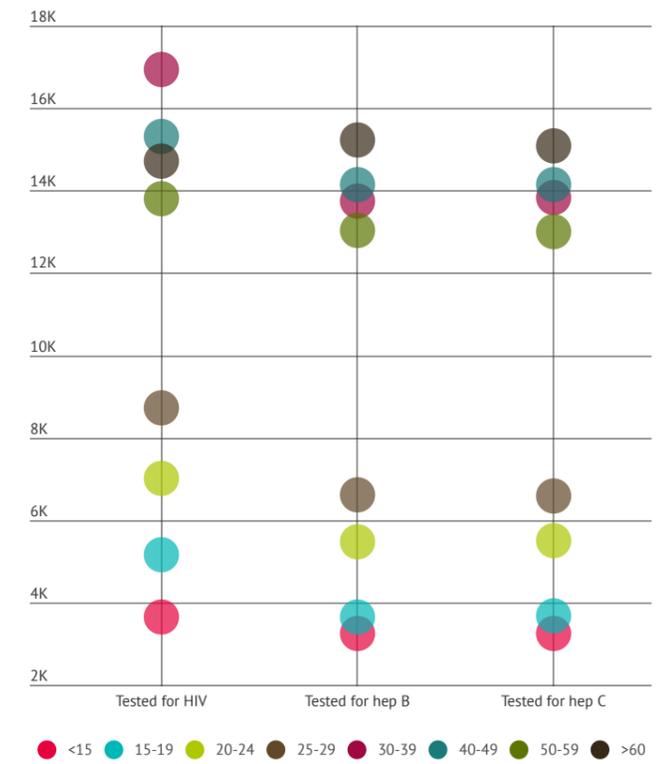


### Voluntary Counseling and testing for Hep-HIV - DEMOGRAPHICS

Average Age of Tested Persons



Age distribution of beneficiaries of Baylor Foundation Romania - the HIV-Hep Voluntary Screening Program, 2007 - 2020



## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

### Long Term Care for People Living with HIV

Constant improvement of services for people living with HIV/AIDS is a necessity. It should be borne in mind that, currently, services are increasingly being addressed to a population that has reached the age of maturity and is likely to age with HIV.

The life expectancy of a person living with HIV, and highly adhering to the antiretroviral treatment as recommended, following a healthy lifestyle and using psychological counseling services to improve their ability to self-manage their health, is equal to that of people who do not suffer from this chronic infection.

Over the past decade, Baylor Black Sea Foundation has provided free Hep-HIV screening to more than 86,000 people and long-term medical and psychosocial care for more than 3,800 people with HIV and hepatitis. On average, the Center of Excellence provides medical and psychosocial services for approximately 1000 HIV-positive people living with HIV/AIDS, in close partnership with the Clinical Infectious Diseases Hospital in Constanța.

The Center of Excellence for HIV patients is not located inside the Clinical Hospital for Infectious Diseases in Constanța, but in a separate building. Here both CHID communicable diseases specialist doctors and nurses and Baylor Foundation Romania team have been working side by side for almost 20 years. The Foundation's team includes doctors of different specialties - dentist, gynecologist, pulmonologist, family doctor, as well as psychologists and social workers, and provides services both at the clinic offices and in the field. This unique way of working in Romania was, in the pandemic situation, a very good solution for HIV patients, because the hospital in Constanța is currently a COVID-19 hospital.

Baylor Black Sea Foundation patients' profile:

- Patients' average age - 36.8 years (48% women)
- Average time since diagnosis - 20.37 years
- 47% of HIV patients: nosocomial infection contracted at the end of the communist era

Psychosocial services are offered in the same location as those of specialized medicine and the office of the Clinical Hospital for Infectious Diseases through which antiretroviral treatment is distributed.

The free psychological counseling and social work services provided by the Baylor Black Sea Foundation consist of clinical consultations and visits to patients' homes.

They led to a strengthened belief in the need for treatment. So,

- approximately 80% of the patients believe that if an HIV-positive person follows the prescribed treatment and takes care of their own health, their life expectancy is similar to an HIV-negative person.

- 67% of patients believe that HIV does not prevent them from carrying out daily activities.

The psycho-social team played a key role in improving the capacity for self-management of health. So,

- 79% of patients are able to recognize signs of worsening health and know how to access health care.

- 84% knew how to contact their doctor (for an appointment).

- 82% stated that they know the contact details of at least one person in Baylor Foundation Romania medical team who can provide help if needed (a doctor, nurse, psychologist or social worker).

Counseling has led to increasing the level of knowledge needed for patients to successfully manage their health. So,

- 88% of patients correctly explained how to follow the treatment.

- 84% understood and were able to explain how treatment controls viral replication.

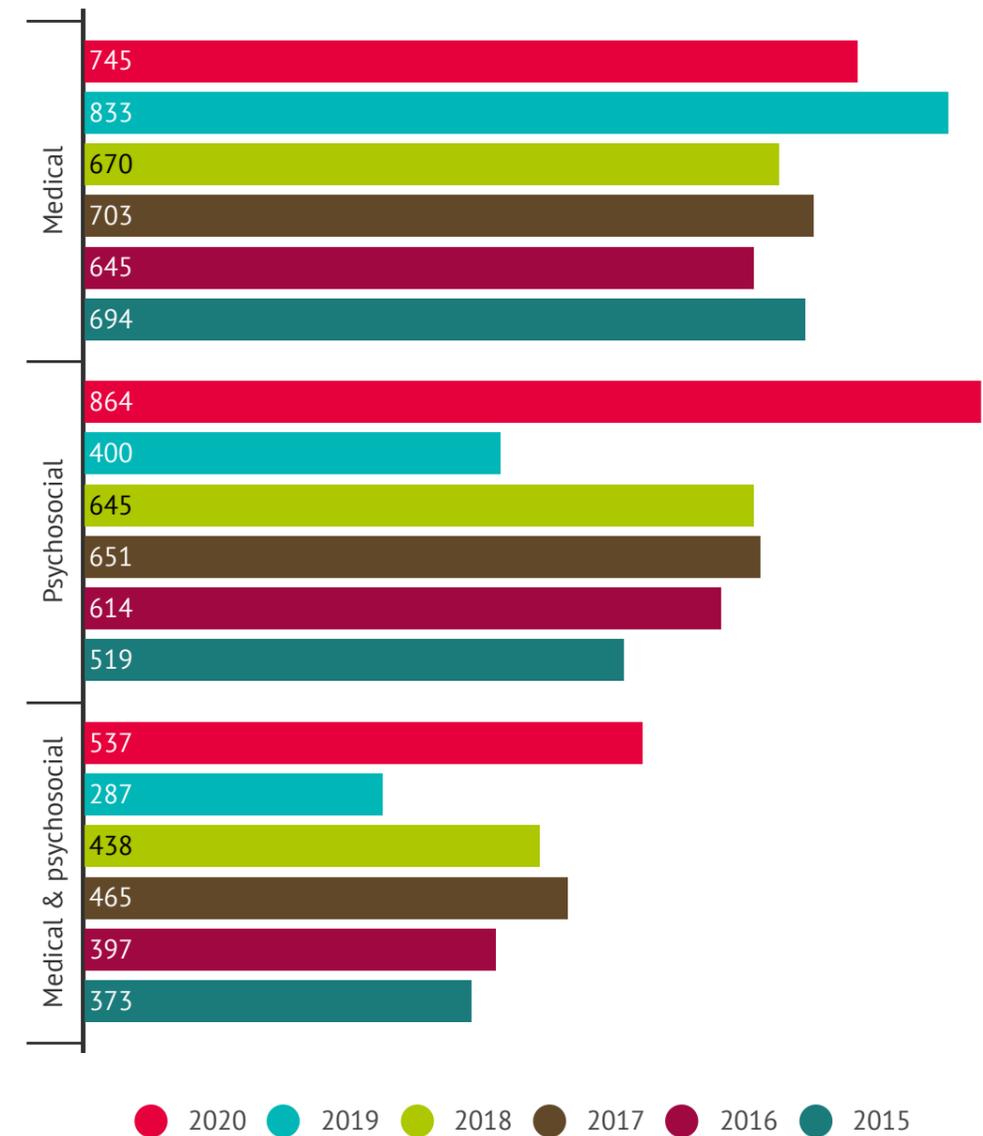
- over 70% knew that Undetectable = Untransmittable

We are going through a context in which the infectious diseases hospitals have become COVID-19 hospitals, and HIV patients who were cared for there are pushed to the edges of the medical system and end up being neglected. It is difficult to apply good health care guidelines, it is very difficult to carry out the mandatory periodic medical evaluations timely and completely, and the components of prevention services and those of psychosocial support are seriously affected.

Many patients living with HIV, due to the treatment, control their chronic infection very well, but develop other diseases and need to be consulted by other specialists. As these patients get older, it becomes more important that their care needs to be addressed by cardiologists, diabetologists, psychiatrists, etc.. That is why the health safety conditions established at the Clinical Center of Excellence have proved extremely useful, allowing the team to respond to the medical and psychosocial needs of patients enrolled in long-term services.

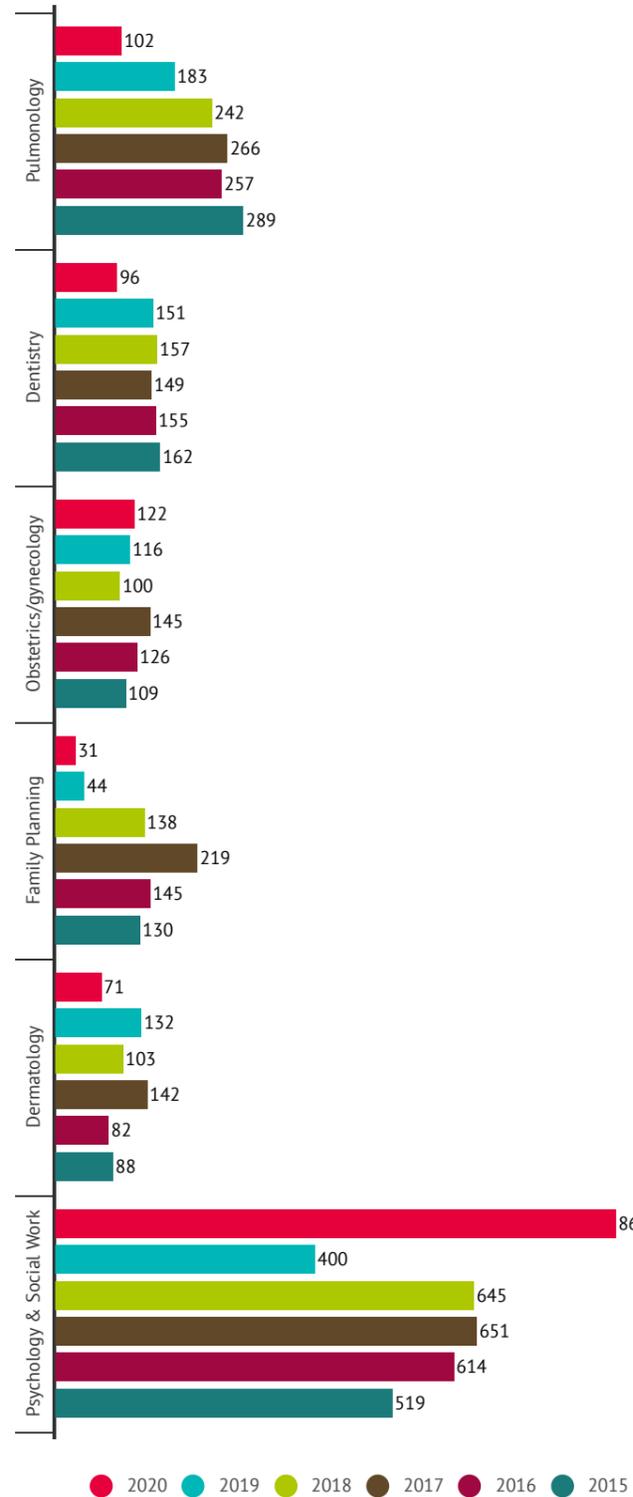
## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The Number of PLWHA Requesting Services at Baylor Black Sea Foundation



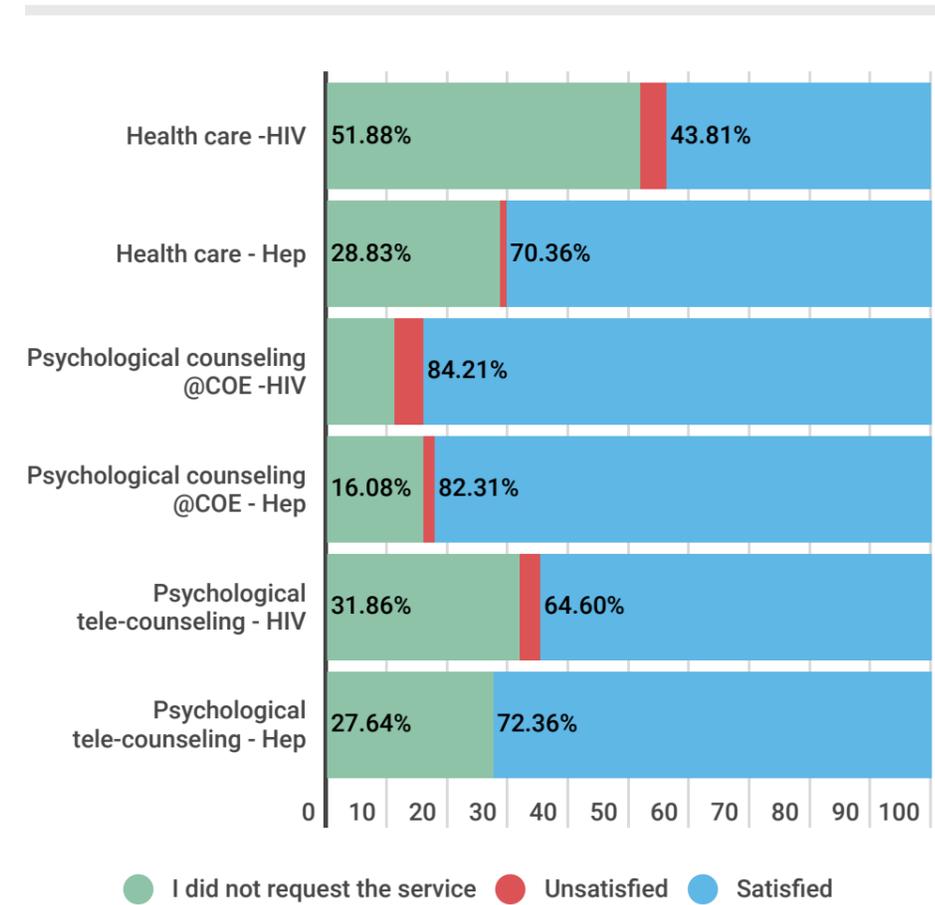
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

HIV Patients Served at Baylor Black Sea Foundation



The Radiography of the Quality of Our Services for PLWHA and/or B, C, D Hepatitis  
The 12 Months Assessment, Performed in December 2020

Hep-HIV Patients' Satisfaction Assessment as per Requested/Accessed Services



## ANALYSIS

### Tele-Counseling, a Valid Alternative for Monitoring Patients and for the Productivity of Clinic Staff in Conditions of Physical Distance

#### Are you a patient at Baylor Black Sea Foundation? Call 0241 480 971!

The Baylor Black Sea Foundation participated in the "Healthy Living with HIV" conference, proceeding taking place between 19 and 20 of November.

The Baylor Black Sea Foundation's team – Ana-Maria Schweitzer, Alexandra Androne, Elena Rizea, Mihaela Bodgan, Florica Niculaie, conducted the study "Tele-counseling helps maintain employee productivity and stays in touch with HIV patients receiving services Baylor Black Sea Foundation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic".

The study demonstrated the effectiveness of the tele-counseling service in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Baylor Black Sea Foundation implemented the new tele-counseling service for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), during the state of emergency enforced in Romania between March and May 2020. This alternative service aimed to ensure continuity in activity and allowed monitoring of approximately 1000 patients. Some of them are required, under normal conditions, to travel up to 300 km to access the services of the Center of Clinical Excellence.

The psychological tele-counseling service responds to the needs of counseling, monitoring, evaluation, information of Baylor Black Sea Foundation patients. They had the opportunity to receive information and to adapt their behaviors to the new sanitary reality and challenges of the pandemic.

People living with HIV/AIDS who benefit Baylor Foundation Romania long-term services have received from our colleagues' recommendations that allowed them to prevent the SARS-CoV-2 infection. Thus, the remote counseling sessions included an assessment of knowledge,

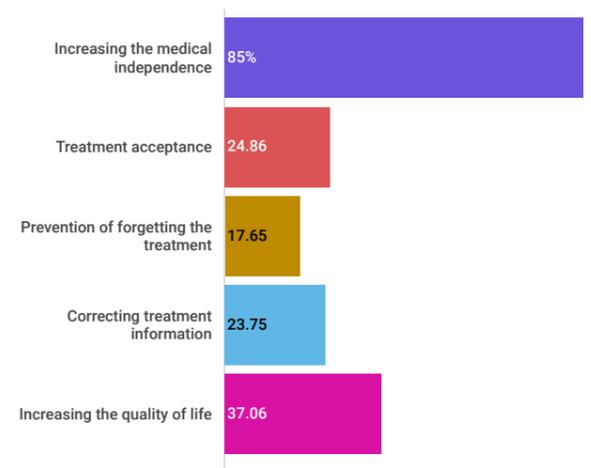
attitudes and behavioral risks as well as a series of personalized recommendations so that the SARS-CoV-2 infection can be successfully prevented.

The tele-counseling program was launched in March 2020 and, over a two months' span, connected with 420 people living with HIV, aged between 19 and 68 years. In this period, 733 counseling sessions took place.

Among the beneficiaries of the tele-counseling sessions, 50% were women and 40% were people living in rural areas. In terms of content, out of the over 700 sessions that took place, 33% focused on COVID-19 issues, 44% were formal psychological assessments and 23% were HIV counseling sessions. The study is part of the Baylor Black Sea Foundation's effort to provide quality services to people living with HIV and requiring integrated medical and psychosocial services.

#### The Needs of PLWHA Patients

Assessment performed on a group of 1082 individuals while providing them the long-term care services



## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

"We considered it highly important to pass on our conclusions to the specialists involved in providing services for people living with HIV and to those who develop public health policies. We are convinced that the results of Baylor Black Sea Foundation psychological tele-counseling service can be a starting point for other institutions that provide services to people living with HIV/AIDS. We appreciate that tele-counseling is a success if we consider the fact that 99.5% of the people who received this service declared their preference for teleconsultation

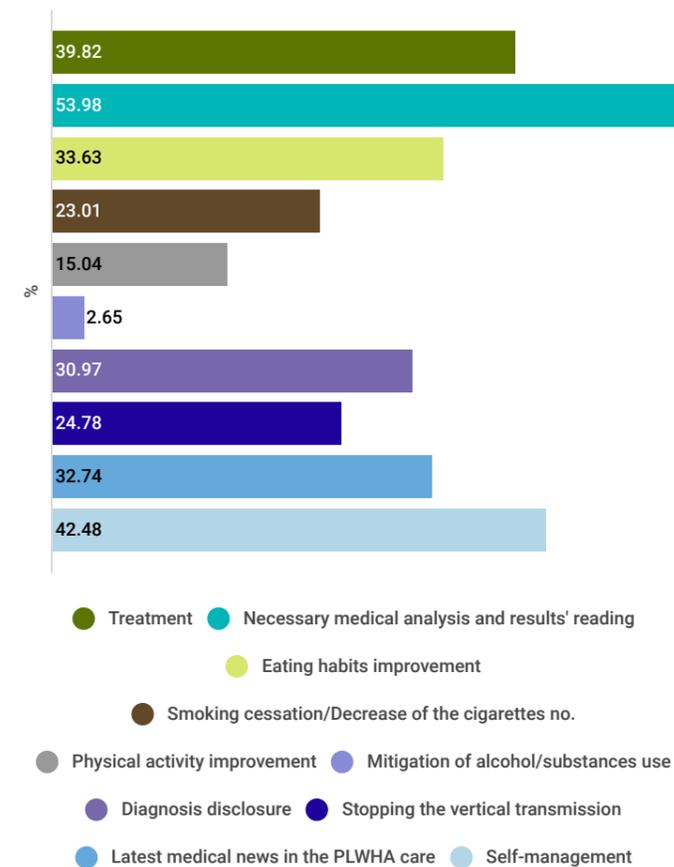
sessions. Our patients also presented arguments in support of their evaluation, among which are flexibility, increased confidentiality." - Ana-Maria Schweitzer, Executive Director

"Our experience since the launch of the new tele-counseling service indicates that psychosocial interventions for people living with HIV/AIDS can be successful when offered remotely. The tele-counseling services offer a valid alternative both for monitoring patients and for maintaining the unaltered productivity of the clinic staff, while

observing the requirements of physical distance. In terms of team performance, compared to the same interval last year, the number of interventions was similar; thus, the team's productivity wasn't affected." - Mihaela Bogdan, Program Manager

"I am honored to have been appointed by my colleagues to present the results. I work in an organization that challenges and provides the necessary resources to anyone who wants to improve. The participation of the Baylor Black Sea Foundation in this conference was another way for us to achieve our goal of providing excellent care to people living with HIV/AIDS. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that the transition to other ways of providing care while observing the same high standards, although challenging due to their novelty, but properly planned and sustained, can be achieved quite easily and can be successfully accepted." - Elena Rizea, Clinical Psychologist

#### PLWHA's Counseling Needs for 2021



## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

### Counseling, Medical Navigation, Medical Services for People Diagnosed with Viral Hepatitis Infections

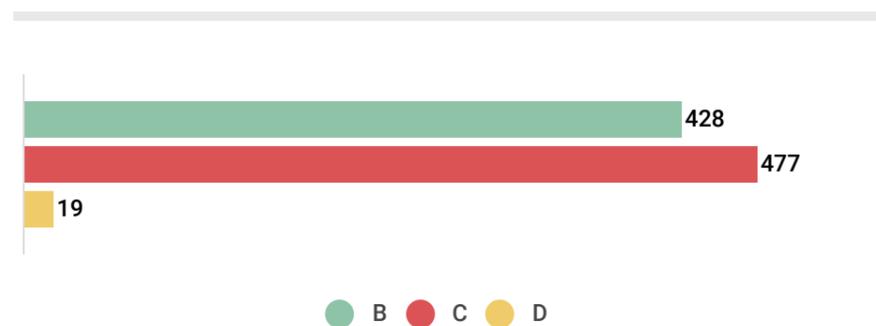
The long-term care program for patients with viral hepatitis, developed and carried out in a sustained manner over several years at Baylor Black Sea Foundation, offers an integrated model of services that meet the needs of people diagnosed with viral hepatitis. The program covers the shortcomings in the public system, without duplicating existing services. People who seek long-term care at Baylor Romania are able to successfully manage their health. Our program allows patients' access to the navigation service, psychological counseling, social work, medical services such as the coverage of the costs of certain medical tests for people without medical insurance or who find themselves in precarious economic situations.

"Periodic testing is essential for diagnosing and successfully treating viral hepatitis. In the absence of treatment or if it is initiated when the disease is already in an advanced stage, the patients are at risk of developing, based on the type of their viral infection, as the case may be, cirrhosis, hepatocellular carcinoma, type II diabetes and other conditions. Navigating the medical system is a difficult challenge for patients, as well. Observing the recommendations of the World Health Organization, the journey of the patient with viral hepatitis involves going through stages such as: infection suspicion, testing, diagnosis, treatment

and monitoring, without interruptions or blockages. Over the years, we have managed to develop and support an integrated service model that meets the needs of those diagnosed. The Baylor Romania model covers gaps in the public system, without duplicating existing services. People who seek long-term care at Baylor are able to successfully manage their health." - Mihaela Bogdan, Program Director

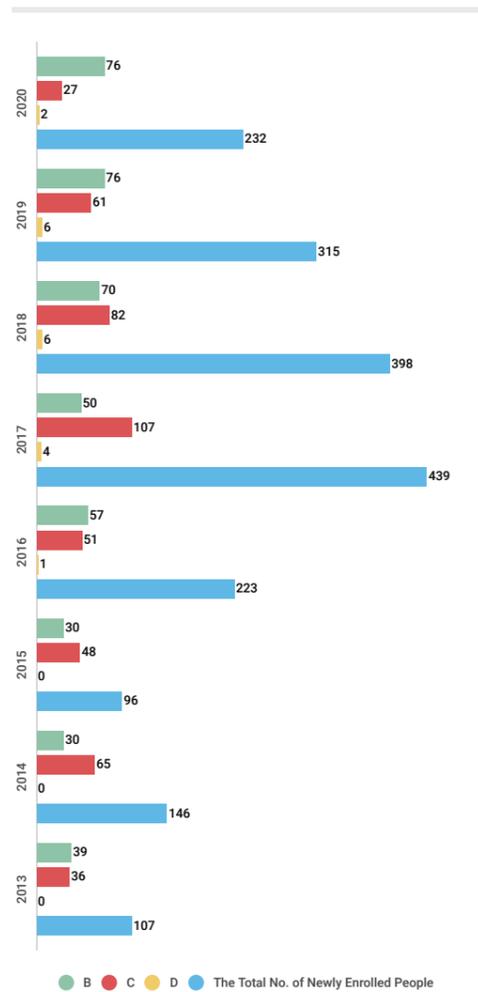
"In the current sanitary context, we were compelled to rigorously adapt the working procedure. We have adopted a complete set of protection measures, both for our team members and for the beneficiaries of the navigation, monitoring and psychological counseling services. We confidently apply measures to lower the risk of infection with the new coronavirus, because they have proven their effectiveness: personal protective equipment for patients and counselors, physical distance, accurate monitoring of the duration of the counseling sessions, regular disinfection of the premises. No one perceived these rules as binding. Nor did they lead to a decrease in the quality of services we provide. We managed to keep the same attention to the needs of the beneficiary. When communicating with the patient, we observe the same accuracy, empathy and attention to detail." - Ancuța Cîrjilă, Patient Navigator

Patients Diagnosed with Hepatitis B, C, D At Baylor Black Sea Foundation between 2013 - 2020

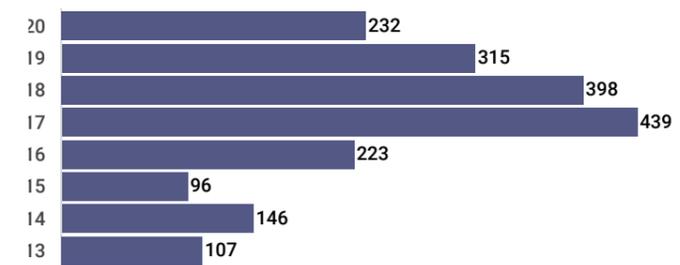


## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Patients Diagnosed with Hepatitis at Baylor Black Sea Foundation

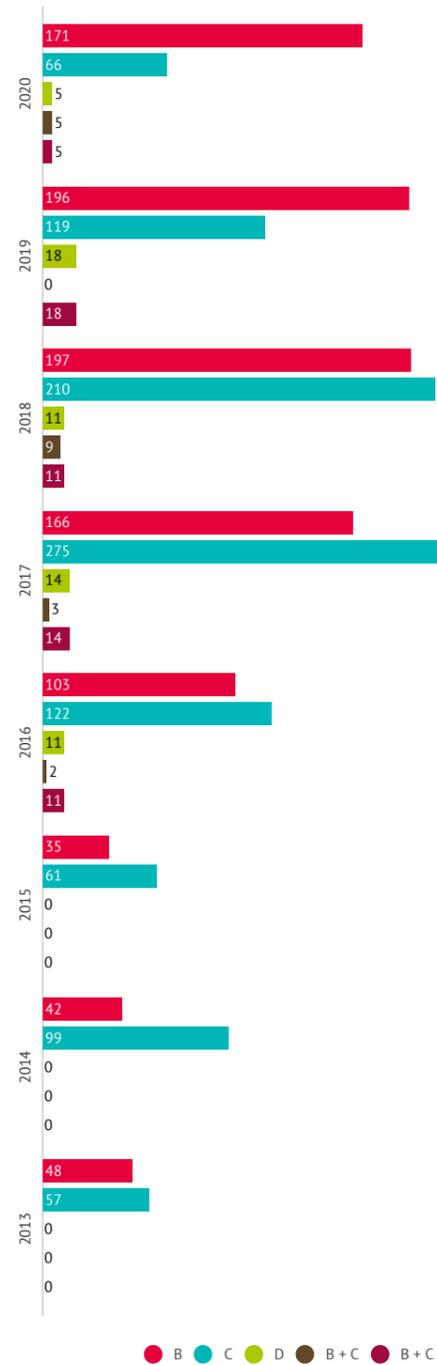


Patients with Viral Hepatitis newly Enrolled in Long Term Services



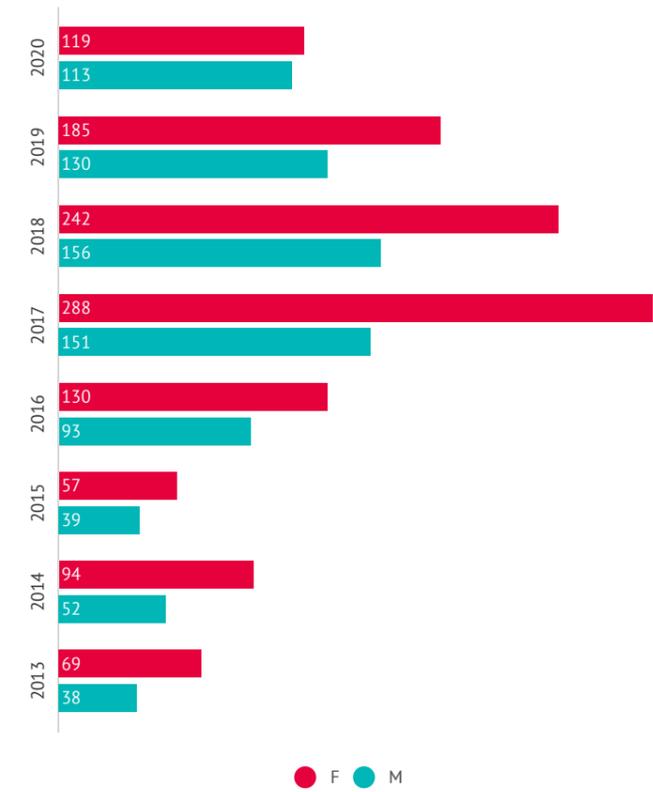
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Distribution of Patients Enrolled in Long Term Services at Baylor Black Sea Foundation Based on the **Type of Infection**

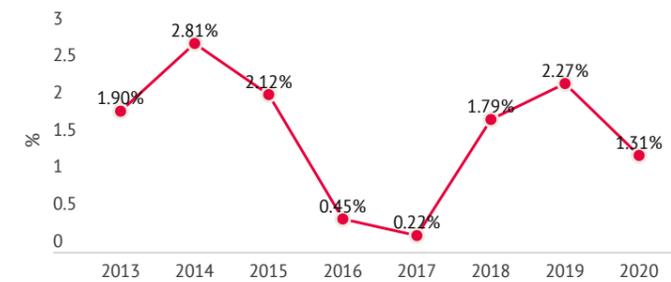


SERVICII PROFESIONALE

**Gender-based Distribution of Patients Enrolled in Long Term Services at Baylor Foundation Romania**



**Percentage of Patients Diagnosed with Viral Hepatitis without Medical Insurance, Enrolled in Long-term Services**



## ANALYSIS

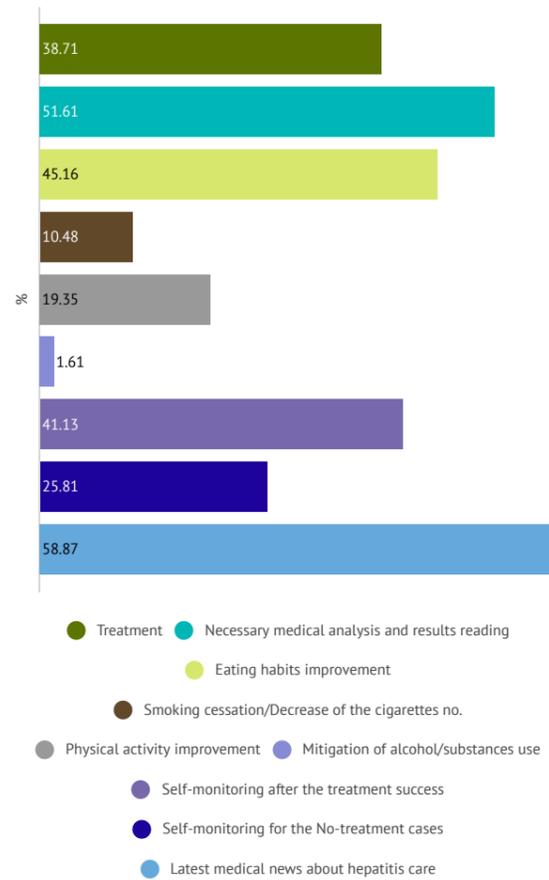
### Patients with Hepatitis C Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle even after Healing. Counseling Helps Maintain Positive Long-term Change

A team of the Baylor Black Sea Foundation evaluated the improvement in the level of knowledge and the results obtained by patients in maintaining a healthy lifestyle after healing.

To conduct this assessment, Baylor Foundation Romania specialists compared two groups of patients:

- those treated with direct-acting antivirals (DAA) who achieved a sustained viral response (SVR) 3 months after treatment
- those waiting for treatment or being under treatment (with not yet reached or measured SVR).

#### Viral Hepatitis Patients' Counseling Needs for 2021



The assessment included 64 people from the group of successfully treated patients and 23 who have not yet been treated or are still undergoing treatment.

The first evaluation took place on average three weeks after enrolling in our psychosocial support program and the second approximately after 106 weeks (2.2 years) for all participants.

The average number of weeks from patients' enrollment to the SVR measurement was 39 (9.5 months).

Statistical analysis showed a significant improvement in the implementation of a healthy lifestyle for the cured patients, compared to those in the group of those who have not been yet healed. No other differences associated with demographic data were identified.

The healed patients were evaluated a second time, 70 weeks after SVR, and reported significant improvements in nutrition, side effects management, partner testing, diagnosis disclosure, social work, sleep and physical activity, health navigation, self-care, medication, rational use of alternative medicine solutions. Patients in the other group reported only improved results of nutrition management, partner testing, and general acceptance of treatment.

*"Patients who experience a sustained viral response and who have 'defeated the disease' have shown that they remain motivated to implement positive long-term lifestyle changes. Providing long-term medical and psychosocial monitoring services to patients, even after the reaching the SVR, can be an excellent strategy to support positive change."* - Lavinia Pană, Patient Navigator



## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

### Pre-Diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Program

The quality of life of patients with chronic infections is directly influenced by how they manage to improve their lifestyle to reduce the risk of associated diseases. From 2019, Baylor Black Sea Foundation started a new project in order to diagnose pre-diabetes and prevent diabetes in people diagnosed with HIV and/or hepatitis.

Screening for pre-diabetes and diabetes completes the complex long-term care model designed by our team.

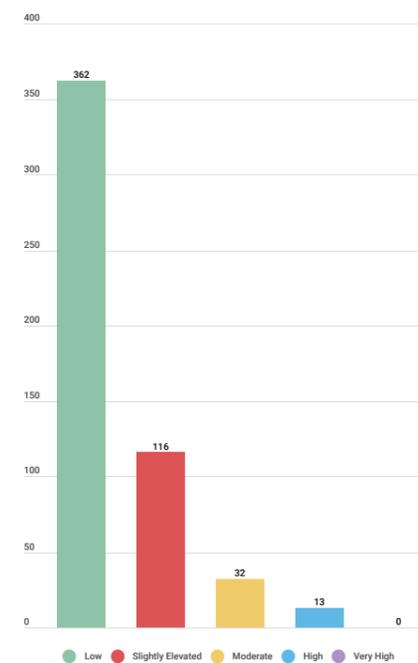
*this new service. This way, with the help of a validated tool, we identified the risk of developing diabetes in the next 10 years in our patients. The advantage of this questionnaire is that, in addition to assessing the risk factors, it also assesses aspects of the patient's lifestyle: fruit and vegetable consumption and physical exercise. Thus, in addition to assessing individual risk, each person also finds out what they can do to delay the risk of developing diabetes or even eliminate it."* - Ștefania Mihale, Manager, Medical Program Development

It is essential to meet the needs of our patients, helping them to detect glycemic disorders and pre-diabetes early. Thus, there is a real possibility of reversing the process of developing type 2 diabetes in patients with HIV or hepatitis. Our team of counselors provides them with qualified support to be able to take and maintain appropriate lifestyle change measures in the long term.

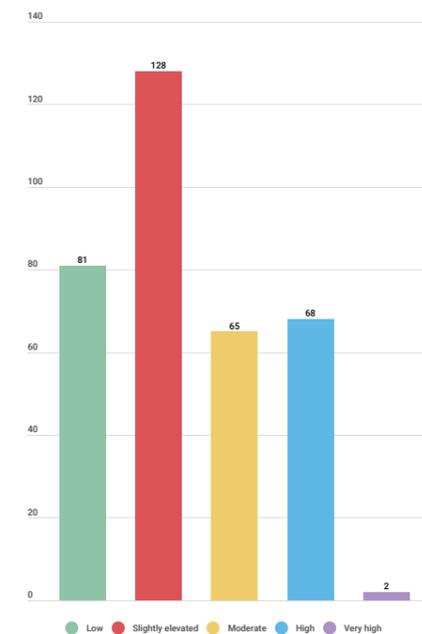


*"During the first 18 months that the program has registered by the end of 2020, using the risk assessment questionnaire developed by the Finnish Diabetes Association, we assessed all long-term care recipients who applied for*

Risk Assessment of Developing Diabetes in the next 10 Years for PLWHA



Risk Assessment of Developing Diabetes in the next 10 Years for the Patients with Chronic Hepatitis



ADVOCACY

# The Mental Health of People Living with HIV – In Focus of the Members of the European Parliament

On December 1st, World AIDS Day, Ana-Maria Schweitzer shared part of Baylor Black Sea Foundation’s nearly two-decade experience in providing mental health services for people living with or affected by HIV.

Thirty years after the start of the HIV epidemic, the mental health of people living with this infection has been brought to the attention of members of the European Parliament.

ABOUT THE EVENT:

THE “DELIVERING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV” CONFERENCE WAS HOSTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. IN THE EVENT, TOGETHER WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM ALL OVER THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, ALSO PARTICIPATED: THE EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR HEALTH AND FOOD

SAFETY, STELLA KYRIAKIDES, THE DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, HANS KLUGE, AND THE SPECIAL ADVISOR OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNAIDS, VINAY SALDANHA.

THE EVENT PROPOSED THE PARTICIPANTS A DIALOGUE INTENDED TO LEAD TO IDENTIFYING POLICY ACTIONS TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV: MENTAL HEALTH IS CRUCIAL TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE, AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH THIS CHRONIC INFECTION FACE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES.

ANA-MARIA SCHWEITZER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE BAYLOR BLACK SEA FOUNDATION, AIMED ALONG WITH OTHER INVITED SPECIALISTS, POLICY MAKERS, HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES OF PATIENTS, CLINICIANS AND PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS, TO HIGHLIGHT CHALLENGES THAT FACE THEM PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND THE IMPACT IT HAS ON THE HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

Mental health is the key to a good life with HIV. As the life expectancy of people diagnosed with HIV increases, the need to focus on improving the quality of life of people living with this infection has become more evident.

People living with HIV face significant mental health challenges. They are more prone than the general population to develop mental disorders such as depression, cognitive problems, memory, concentration. Added to this is the challenge of tackling stigma and discrimination in society, in the workplace and in the health system.

Mental health problems - especially when left untreated or poorly managed - can lead to deteriorating physical health, diminished ability to self-manage health and adhere to antiretroviral therapy to reduce and control the viral load. All this can lead, in the absence of effective and uniformly applied measures, to negative implications for public health and the future trajectory of the HIV epidemic.

The time has come for a major change: public health policies must go beyond controlling the viral load, to focus on the quality of life, through multidisciplinary long-term care services, resizing services and updating policies so that “living well with HIV” can become a reality for all the diagnosed people.

The experience of the Baylor Black Sea Foundation is considered relevant at European level because:

Over the past decade, Baylor Foundation Romania has provided free testing services for chronic infections with HIV and hepatitis B and C viruses to over 86,000 people. At the same time, the Foundation provided long-term medical and psychosocial services to almost 4,000 people with HIV and hepatitis.

“We need to start treating the person and not just the disease”. Watch Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides discuss the importance of good mental health for people living with HIV and their quality of life.

#HIV #AIDS #MentalHealth #Healthcare #EuropeanCommission #StellaKyriakides European Commission



Psychosocial services play a key role in improving the self-management capacity of people living with HIV. So, “We aim to improve the self-management health skills of our patients, especially when they find themselves in unexpected situations. That is why our team of psychologists aims to improve the ability of people in long-term care to plan, to make healthy choices, to set personal health goals and to create a favorable environment for achieving them. The fact that today, during this conference, we all focus on the importance of the mental health of the people living with HIV, looking for the best solutions confirms that at Baylor Foundation Romania we are already on the right track!”, declared during the event Ana-Maria Schweitzer, Executive Director

## BAYLOR BLACK SEA FOUNDATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Long term psychosocial and medical care for over 3800 people living with HIV or with chronic hepatitis

Prevention of other diseases among people living with HIV and AIDS  
• PAP screening  
• Cardio screening

Community HIV and hepatitis prevention through HIV and hepatitis free screening  
• over 75,000 people tested

Community education  
• professional trainings for specialists  
• information dissemination through social media

Community support  
• Donations of drugs

2001

2003

2005

2007

2009

2011

2013

2015

2017

2018

2019

2020

Centrul Clinic de Excelență Spitalul Clinic de Boli Infecțioase Constanța  
Baylor College of Medicine  
Texas Children's Hospital  
Abbott Fund  
AbbVie Foundation

Multidisciplinary care

Private public partnership.

Patient centric approach

Visit us at [baylor.ro](http://baylor.ro)

Baylor Black Sea Foundation

Those who strive can be helped

2

### DELIVERING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

World AIDS Day | 1 December 2020 | 10:00 - 12:30 CET

Sharing of best practices in mental health support for people living with HIV



Ana-Maria Schweitzer  
Executive Director,  
Baylor Romania



## ADVOCACY

Hic sunt leones\*

# Patient Navigator and Coverage of Unknown Areas in the Hepatitis B or C Patient's Journey

Receiving a diagnosis of cancer or chronic infection is a shock. Each time. For each person receiving it. Regardless of the communication skills of the person transmitting the information.

Such news raises a lot of questions for anyone. From "And now, what do I do?" or "Where do I start?" to many others, related to tests, diet, sleep and rest regimen, diagnosis disclosure, the rights of the patient with a chronic infection, national programs he or she can access and the conditions to be met in order to do so.

Well, the patient navigator is, if you will, the cartographer who, together with each patient, draws, step by step, the route to be followed. The patient navigator constantly reminds the patient that there is life after receiving such a diagnosis.

Being a patient navigator for people diagnosed with viral hepatitis responds to the real need of any patient to find out correct information, on his or her understanding, about:

- the disease with which was diagnosed,
- specializations and specialists who can treat viral hepatitis,
- the hospitals or wards, clinics to which patients must go,
- the medical analysis to be performed, and when to be done.

Patient navigators at Baylor Black Sea Foundation take patients as soon as they receive confirmation of a diagnosis of hepatitis virus infection at either one of the Baylor Foundation Romania Rapid, Voluntary, Free, and Confidential Testing Centers or referred to the Foundation after being diagnosed in other laboratories. The only condition to be met is filling in a request for receiving long-term care services.

The profession of patient navigator is a relatively new one, being introduced in the Romanian Code of Occupations at the request of a non-governmental organization, by the end of 2016. It originally appeared

in the United States in the 90s, so that patients can access to appropriate methods of treatment. The best known in this professional niche remains the navigator for patients with different forms of cancer. On the same model and having similar attributions, the navigator for patients with viral hepatitis has the role of helping patients to make the necessary appointments in order to have access to the treatment in the shortest possible time. Baylor Black Sea Foundation pioneered in Romania when adding to its team patient navigators.

Long-term care of patients diagnosed with hepatitis B or C involves informing patients about issues such as:

- the lifestyle changes that diagnosed people need to make in order to ensure that they will be able to successfully manage chronic infection in the long run, so that their quality of life does not suffer;
- aspects related to possible reactions to treatment;
- scheduling appointments and medical analysis;
- accessing national health program facilities;
- having some medical expenses covered when facing not only a chronic infection diagnosis but financial challenges as well.

The Baylor Black Sea Foundation patient navigators are the ones to shed light for each patient, according to his specific needs, to explain the steps to follow on the shortest path in order to access to treatment. The patient navigator plays a key role in how each patient understands their diagnosis, the treatment to be followed, the changes they need to make. The navigator is also the one who evaluates the risk of depression of the patient with a chronic infection diagnosis.

We can say that, in our organization's long-term care model, behind every patient who successfully manages his condition after receiving a diagnosis of chronic hepatitis virus infection is a patient navigator who carefully monitors each case and intervenes when necessary.

\*There are lions here (i.e. unexplored, wild, unmapped territories)

## SARS-CoV-2 Infection and Transmission Online Risk Assessment and Counseling Tool

Scientists from around the world, experts and volunteers from 35 states, completed in just six weeks a questionnaire available in 29 languages, including Romanian (<https://your-covid-19-risk.com/>). The online test 'Your COVID-19 Risk' allows the assessment of users' personal risk of infection.



The project employs knowledge of behavioral science to solve real-life problems, such as human behavior when facing the risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection and/or transmission, a real problem of human behavior.

The test was developed specifically to help users stay safe during a pandemic.

With the help of the test, anyone can calculate their score and have the opportunity to find out what behaviors increase their personal risk of infection. In only 3 minutes, the test available in Romanian language on <https://your-covid-19-risk.com/> calculates the personal score regarding:

- The risk of being exposed,
- The risk of being contaminated,
- Personal risk compared to the risk of the closed ones,
- Behavioral profile during the enforced state of alert.

*"After May 15, 2020, it was necessary to find a balance between preventing the SARS-CoV-2 infection and resuming normal activities. This being the case, individual behaviors make the difference!"*

*The test we worked on in an alert pace, together with the international team of experts allow users to find out the concrete behaviors that can provide protection in an uncertain period. The results are provided to users in the form of images that allow the visualization of scores calculated based on the risk factors unique to each person.*

*The test investigates the motivation and beliefs of Romanians who do not respect the rules of social distancing, wearing masks or washing hands. Motivational information is needed to facilitate the behavior change. Fines also*

*have their role, but the behavioral change obtained through fines is short-lived. More important is the change of behavior on one's own initiative, and through this test we will find out more details about how we can facilitate this voluntary change."* - Ana-Maria Schweitzer, Executive Director at the Baylor Black Sea Foundation, volunteer in the project.

IN THE PARTICULAR CASE OF ROMANIA, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH DOES NOT BASE ITS RECOMMENDATIONS IN REGARDS OF SOCIAL DISTANCING, VOLUNTARY ISOLATION, AND HAND HYGIENE ON ANY PSYCHOLOGY STUDY. THE SITUATION DOES NOT DIFFER IN THE OTHER STATES FROM WHICH THE EXPERTS INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT COME FROM. THE MESSAGES SAY ONLY WHAT EVERY PERSON SHOULD DO, WITHOUT KNOWING

THE MOTIVATIONS, WITHOUT MESSAGES BEING CALIBRATED ACCORDING TO THE REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS. BY COLLECTING THE INFORMATION ANONYMOUSLY, THE TEAM RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS TEST WILL BE ABLE TO TRANSMIT TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES SPECIFIC DATA THAT WILL HELP THE DEVELOPMENT OF MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCORDING TO THE POPULAR PROFILE.

*"Your COVID-19 Risk starts with a few general questions and customizes the information provided according to the answers and the geographical location of the user. The questions are identical for the whole globe population, and the feedback messages are adapted for each country, language and level of adoption of some essential barrier-gestures: keeping one's distance, social isolation and hand washing. This pandemic is forcing us all to learn quickly and try out things that, until a few months ago, seemed impossible. Your COVID-19 Risk is such an experience."* said a key expert in the project, Alexandra Dima, postdoctoral researcher in Health Sciences specializing in health psychology and communication at the University Claude Bernard 1, Lyon.



Another project expert, Adriana Solovei, a PhD student in Health Communication Sciences at the University of Maastricht, said: "This tool can be a real help for users to reduce their risk of becoming infected or infecting others with the new coronavirus. Until a vaccine appears, the correct behavior of each of us remains the most effective way to protect ourselves in this pandemic."



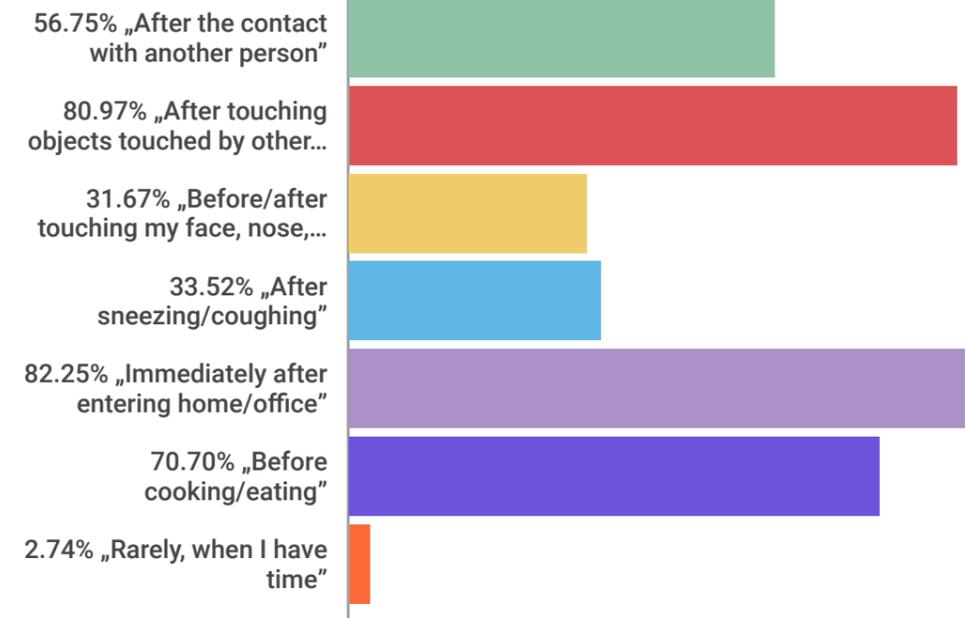
### Effects on targeted behaviors. Is there a zero risk of infection?

Human behavior is central to this pandemic. The test shows that there is no zero risk of infection with the new coronavirus. But it shows us exactly what we are already doing well and what are the behaviors that need to be improved by each user! The development of the questionnaire is based on elements of behavioral science regarding:

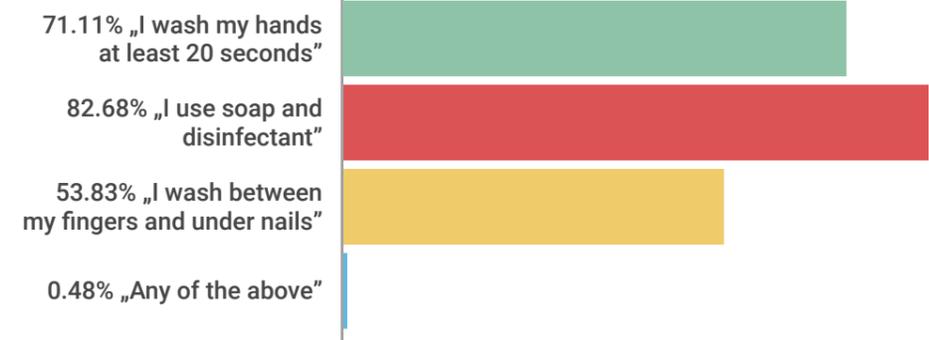
- Hand hygiene,
- Observance of the rules of social distancing and
- Voluntary isolation
- Wearing a mask and gloves.

In our country, Your COVID-19 Risk was used by over 7,000 people in two weeks, the result placing Romania fourth in terms of number of users.

## Key Situations When Users Correctly Wash Their Hands



## Users Correctly Washing Their Hands



## DAYS OF OUR LIVES



## Key People at Baylor Black Sea Foundation



**Ana-Maria Schweitzer**  
*Executive Director*



**Monica Frangeti**  
*Financial Director*



**Ștefania Mihale**  
*Medical Programs Development Manager*



**Mihaela Bogdan**  
*Projects' Manager*



**Negivan Septar**  
*Head Nurse*



## Constanța

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The Hep-HIV Voluntary Counselling and Testing  
Centre  
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Office 243, 143 Tomis Ave.  
0241.691.730, secretariat@baylor.ro

[www.baylor.ro](http://www.baylor.ro)  
[www.texaschildrensglobalhealth.org](http://www.texaschildrensglobalhealth.org)