

COVID-19 - Coronavirus disease 2019 NORTH MACEDONIA FLASH UPDATE 27 21 April 2020

Data as reported by authorities by 21:00, 20 April 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

- 200 COVID-19 patients have recovered so far. Since 17 April 2020, eight COVID-19 fatalities (3 on Friday, 2 on Sunday and 3 on Monday) and 144 new cases (36 on Friday, 53 on Saturday, 37 on Sunday and 18 on Monday) were reported. The total number of registered COVID-19 cases in the country is 1225.
- 12 133 coronavirus tests have been carried out in North Macedonia so far. COVID-19 cases from 24 cities have been reported and first cases are reported in Demir Hisar, Makedonski Brod and Pehcevo indicating all of country widespread community transmission. Kumanovo seems to have become one of main hotspots of the epidemic. 71% of the cases are reported from three cities Skopje, Kumanovo and Prilep (411, 338, 117 cases, respectively). 63% of the deaths are in Kumanovo, Struga and Skopje.
- New restriction measures: People in Prilep, Kumanovo and Tetovo will have
 to wear masks, scarfs, shawls or similar piece of clothing to cover the mouth
 and nose, as of 22 April 2020. Organized transport of passengers, namely entry
 and exit from Tetovo and the surrounding municipalities, is banned as of 21
 April 2020.Air, rail and road traffic between Greece and North Macedonia
 suspended until 15 May 2020.
- Safe Ramadan practices in the context of the COVID-19: This document provides public health guidance for social and religious practices and gatherings during Ramadan. It also offers advice to strengthen mental and physical well-being so as to live in full the spirit of Ramadan as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Access the publication (Uploaded 16 April 2020)
- WHO HQ released data on COVID-19 cases by <u>age and sex</u> over the weekend, based on a total of 747,546 confirmed cases documented via a standardized <u>case reporting form</u> received from 113 countries, territories and areas. The sex ratio (male to female) among confirmed COVID-19 cases

areas. The sex ratio (male to female) among confirmed COVID-19 cases is 1.03:1, and the median age is 51 (interquartile range is 36-65) years. Note, 74 per cent of the forms come from the US, Italy and Germany.

• Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19: This document is intended for national authorities and decision makers in countries that have introduced large scale public health and social

SITUATION IN NUMBERS total (new) cases in the last 24 hours **North Macedonia** 1225 confirmed (18) 54 deaths 200 recovered Globally 2 314 621 confirmed (72 846) 157 847 deaths (5296) **European Region** 1 149 071 confirmed (26 882) 103 586 deaths (2648) **Regions of the Americas** 858 631 confirmed (36 771) 40 615 deaths (2357) **Western Pacific Region** 132 438 confirmed (1326) 5648 deaths (27) **Eastern Mediterranean Region** 129 433 confirmed (4742) 6048 deaths (140) **South-East Asia Region** 29 576 confirmed (2257) 1275 deaths (90) **African Region** 14 760 confirmed (868) 662 deaths (34) WHO RISK ASSESSMENT Very high in all North Macedonia measures. It offers guidance for adjusting public health and social measures, relaxing lockdown, while managing the risk of a resurgence of cases. - Access the publication (Uploaded 16 April 2020).

• The urgent need for a COVID-19 vaccine underscores the pivotal role immunizations play in protecting lives and economies. Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, marking the European Immunization Week 2020, stressed 'we must not, especially now, let down our guard on immunizations'. WHO and UNICEF have released a joint statement to mark European Immunization Week 2020, which is available http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/events/2020/04/european-immunization-week-2020/statements/whounicef-joint-statement-maintaining-routine-immunization-services-vital-during-the-covid-19-pandemic

SURVEILLANCE

Figure 1. North Macedonia – Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases (n=1207) and deaths (n=51) by 20 April 2020 20:00

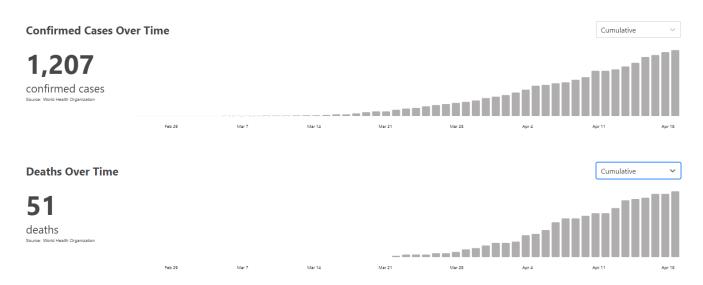
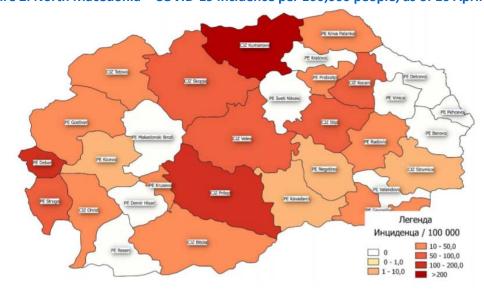


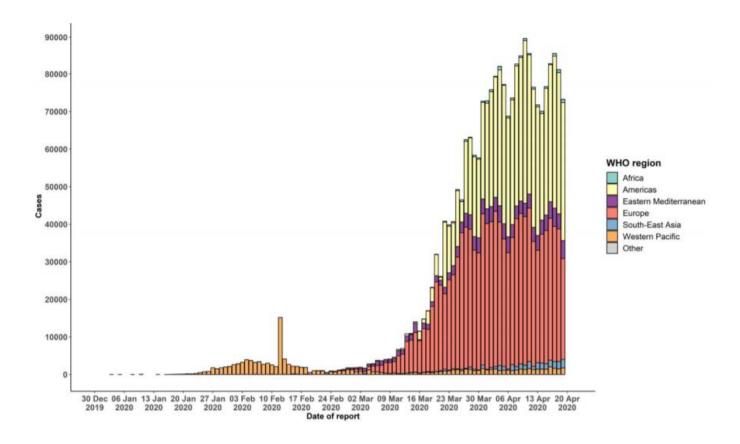
Figure 2. North Macedonia - COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, as of 16 April 2020



highest The cumulative incidence is in Kumanovo (214.5/100,000 people), followed by Debar (183.8/100,000 people) and Prilep (104.9/100,000 people). Five other cities have incidence above 50.0 cases per 100,000 people (Struga, Veles, Shtip, Kochani and Skopje).

Age of patients vary from 0-91 years (median age – 46 years old). However, the highest risk group is between 50-59 years old.

The disagregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases through 15 April 2020 which includes the cases reported on 16 April 2020 by MoH could be accessed at the www.iph.mk



CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-2019), EUROPE

Based on the WHO and ECDC data as of 20 April 2020 10:00 CET, cases reported in the WHO European Region, represent 49.6% of the global burden to date. Globally, USA carries the heaviest case load (723 605), with Spain and Italy concluding top-3. In addition, four more countries from the European Region are in the top-10 (Germany, United Kingdom, France and Turkey).

In Europe, five countries reported 100 000 cases or more (Spain 195 944 cases, Italy 178 972 cases, Germany 141 672 cases, United Kingdom 120 071 and France 111 463), accounting for 65% of all European cases. Twelve countries reported 10 000 cases or more, listed in descending order (Turkey, Russian Federation, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Portugal, Ireland, Austria, Sweden, and Israel).

Cumulatively, 66% of the global burden of COVID-19 deaths (157 847 deaths) have been reported in the European Region (103 586 deaths), with Italy, Spain, France and the United Kingdom each reporting more than 10 thousand deaths and together accounting for 77% of all deaths in Europe. Another six countries in the Region reported 1000 deaths or more (Belgium 5683 deaths, Germany 4404 deaths, Netherlands 3684 deaths, Turkey 2017 deaths, Sweden 1540 deaths and Switzerland 1134 deaths).

COVID-19 SITUATION IN EUROPE: ONLINE PRESS BRIEFING ON THURSDAY, 23 APRIL 2020, AT 11:00 (CEST)

WHO/Europe will hold its weekly virtual press briefing with Dr Hans Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, and technical experts. The briefing will present:

- · a short situation update on COVID-19 in the WHO European Region
- COVID-19 and nursing homes

The virtual press conference will be broadcast live on the WHO/Europe Facebook account https://www.facebook.com/WHOEurope

You can join the briefing via Zoom meeting and ask your question online (see connection details below).

CONNECTION DETAILS: Join Zoom Meeting: https://who.zoom.us/j/92730279432

Meeting ID: 927 3027 9432; Password: 007784

WHAT WHO IS DOING FOR COVID19 IN NORTH MACEDONIA?

In line with the strategic Government's approach in fighting COVID19 whereby efforts are put on increasing testing, maintaining quality COVID19 care and essential care and protecting health care workers, WHO works closely with the government and national and global health partners to enable the response.



- WHO supports the country to raise awareness about maintaining essential health services and importance of immunization in preventing diseases and protecting life at the time of COVID19. Activities are held during the European Immunization Week 2020, from 20-26 April 2020. Click here: European Immunization Week.
- who is supporting North Macedonia for Sero-epidemiological studies investigating the extent of infection in the general population, as determined by seropositivity. A standardized who master protocol is available that is being now tailored to country needs in terms of public health, laboratory and clinical systems, capacity, availability of resources and cultural appropriateness. Using this standardized protocol allows for comparability of data across different countries and helps to determine important epidemiological parameters (e.g. the proportion of the population that remains susceptible to infection, proportion of asymptomatic infections etc.) which

WHO action in COVID-19 outbreak in North Macedonia aims at limiting the virus spread, protecting health and the health workers at the frontline, preserving the health care system capacity and its sustainability to respond and provide essential services to the population.

WHO is the lead UN agency for Health and main technical and health policy advisor to the government on COVID-19 containment and mitigation.

WHO works in coordination closely with other UN agencies as per the UN reform.

Western Balkan including North Macedonia is one of the priority countries for the WHO European Region.

Technical support, guidance and assistance are provided through the WHO Country Office from all levels of the Organization.

There is abundance of technical guidance WHO has developed in all areas of work: we are supporting the country to develop technical plans and implement priority interventions in the framework of a strong nation-wide strategic response.

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

inform public health action. The protocol can be accessed here: https://www.who.int/publications-detail/population-based-age-stratified-seroepidemiological-investigation-protocol-for-covid-19-virus-infection

- WHO donated 5000 COVID tests to the Virology Lab of the Institute of Public Health on 8 April 2020.
- With WHO/USAID support, the **Epidemiological emergency operations venue at MOH** is now equipped and functional in its temporary premises, refurbished and with IT equipment.
- WHO held a training meeting on Solidarity trial to all those involved in the scheme from COVID19 treating hospitals.
- A Ceremony for launching of the USAID / WHO joint support to the country to help contain and mitigate the COVID19 virus spread https://un.mk/ceremony-for-launching-of-the-usaid-who-support-to-the-country-to-help-mitigate-the-spread-of-covid19/ was organized on 7 April 2020. This act of solidarity is directed mainly to support the health staff at the frontline of this fight against the virus: to ensure they have the means and the skills to protect themselves and control the infection all health care settings not only in treatment centers. A large part of the grant will also help the Institute of Public Health to continue its remarkable work in tracing and testing and early identification of the cases.
- WHO also held on Friday 3 April 2020, a **Zoom training session in Macedonian language** open for **all Health Care workers dealing with COVID19** for the proper practices in Infection control and prevention of virus transmission in hospitals and clinical management of severe respiratory cases.
- WHO developed a **risk assessment tool to be used by health care facilities with COVID-19 patients**. The tool is to be completed for all health workers who have been exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 patient in a health care facility. The tool will help determine the risk of COVID-19 virus infection of all HCWs who have been exposed to a COVID-19 patient and then provides recommendations for appropriate management of these HCWs, according to their infection risk.
- WHO continuing the roll out of the **Partners Platform for the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP)**: Onboarding has taken place supporting North Macedonia to link with international support; the Country Preparedness and Response Plan has been uploaded for increasing capacity for 2000 COVID19 cases.
- The country is active on the platform https://covid-19-response.org
- SPRP includes health systems continuity, the Platform will have a 9th Pillar for assessment of priority actions to maintain essential health services.
- COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor (HSRM) has been formally launched by WHO EURO and the European Observatory for Health systems. North Macedonia is participating. https://www.covid19healthsystem.org/mainpage.aspx

WHO continues to be actively engaged in:

- In risk communication targeted messages and developed many messages and infographics in national languages for display at MOH media channels and other. WHO <u>Facebook/Twitter</u>; MoH <u>Facebook/Twitter</u>; <u>WHO Europe website for</u> <u>COVID-19</u>
- Providing technical advice and support to many national and international partners for stepping up everyone's engagement in halting the virus spread and its impact on North Macedonia.
- Ensuring lab and testing tools are available for COVID19 related testing kits and PPE.
- Assisting the MOH in gaps and needs assessment and bridging those gaps for better health system coping and response.
- Establishing bilateral partnerships, resource mobilization, and joint plans to address gaps and needs of the MOH.
- Sustaining professional and technical knowledge of all health care workers in the country through the online WHO training course for COVID-19 for health care and infection control and protection (IPC) is now available in Macedonian Language on the WHO learning platform for Health workers. https://openwho.org/
- Generating Robust data needed to show which treatments are the most effective, by North Macedonia joining the WHO
 SOLIDARITY Trial which is a large, international therapeutic study that will allow also receiving free of charge medicines
 for COVID19 and latest evidence-based indications for changing treatment protocols when needed to reduce mortality,
 length of stay under mechanical respiration and reducing complications.

- Tracking the epidemiological spread of the virus, supports early warning system and keep communities and frontline responders informed with the latest technical guidance.
- Contributing to the UN in the country to make sure that timely procurement takes place and supporting the newly set UN coordination mechanism for the COVID19. 1UN MK@facebook.com

WHO [New]

Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19: This document is intended for national authorities and decision makers in countries that have introduced large scale public health and social measures. It offers guidance for adjusting public health and social measures, relaxing lockdown, while managing the risk of a resurgence of cases. [New]

Access the publication (Uploaded 16 April 2020).

WHO has published a brief on the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in patients with COVID-19. Concerns have been raised that NSAIDs may be associated with an increased risk of adverse effects. However, as explained in the brief, at present there is no evidence of severe adverse effects. [New]

https://www.who.int/newsroom/commentaries/detail/the-use-ofnon-steroidal-anti-inflammatory-drugs-(nsaids)-in-patients-with-covid-19

WHO has recently published an updated strategy to help guide the public health response to COVID-19 which is available [New]

https://www.who.int/publicationsdetail/covid-19-strategy-update---14april-2020

Preparedness, prevention and control of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in refugees and migrants in non-camp settings [New]

https://www.who.int/publicationsdetail/preparedness-prevention-andcontrol-of-coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-for-refugees-and-migrants-in-noncamp-settings

If you missed it, you can watch the **One World Together at Home Music Global Special Live Stream Recording HERE.**

NORTH MACEDONIA STRATEGIC RESPONSE AND ACTION

North Macedonia mobilized an all-of-government action to fight this new coronavirus, including scaling up emergency response mechanisms in all sectors. Actions and readjustments of measures are continuous and monitoring of the situation is ongoing on daily basis. The country is in declared national emergency Announced by the President of the Republic on 18 March 2020 for one month.

On the health front, the country is working hard now to ensure its COVID19 hospitalization surge capacity with the necessary personnel are in place with the influx of additional cases in recent days.

The Ministry of Health increased public health measures, such as rapid identification, diagnosis and management of the cases, identification and follow up of the contacts, infection prevention and control in health care settings, implementation of health measures for travelers, awareness-raising in the population and risk communication and counter misinformation as well as minimizing social and economic impact through multisectoral partnerships.

People in Prilep, Kumanovo and Tetovo will have to wear masks, scarfs, shawls or similar piece of clothing to cover the
mouth and nose outside their homes, at public places, outdoor and indoor areas, markets and shops as of 22 April 2020.
 The aim of the measure is to create conditions for more movement all the while protection is guaranteed. The regulation

also foresees fines for the citizens which will be caught in public without protection. The Ministry of Health is tasked to provide a part of the donations of protective equipment to the health institutions in these three cities.

- Organized transport of passengers, namely entry and exit from Tetovo and the surrounding municipalities, is banned as of 21 April 2020.
- All institutions, agencies and local offices in Kumanovo are instructed to reduce their capacities and enforce specific
 protective measures for the purpose of isolating as many people as possible during this period. The Government
 recommends that all citizens of North Macedonia, especially those living in Kumanovo, Prilep and Tetovo, reduce
 outings from their homes, as well as designate one family member responsible for buying groceries and medicines.
- The Central crisis headquarters for COVID-19 to discuss the upcoming holy Muslim month of Ramadan in the next few days and the need for adoption of package of decision regarding this month.
- The Prime Minister announced that the process for life to return to normal will begin after Labor Day 1 May and highlighted that the process will not be fast, nor will happen immediately but will be implemented in several stages.
- All patients from the Hospital in Kumanovo are transferred to the Clinic for Infectious Diseases in Skopje since the number of health professionals in the hospital in Kumanovo has decreased as many of them are in self-isolation. The infectious disease department in the hospital will function as triage point where assessment of the health status and decisions about referrals will be made.
- The Greek government has extended the temporary suspension of all transport services to North Macedonia and the ban prohibiting Macedonian nationals from entering the country until 15 May 2020.
- 2800 citizens are staying in state quarantine facilities after they have been repatriated from other countries.
- 121 people caught breaking the curfew in the past 24 hours 92 were detained and appropriate measures will be taken for the rest.

UN, DONATIONS AND PARTNER COORDINATION- COVID-19

To provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach in identifying and repurposing the available bilateral assistance to the COVID-19 response, all public administration bodies receiving bilateral donor assistance will report promptly to the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) the amount of funds available for each project. The SEA will then submit a formal request to the bilateral donors for the reuse of funds in accordance with the identified priority needs for COVID19.

- A **Chinese donation** consisting of 5 016 COVID-19 tests, 5 000 protective suits, 30 000 medical masks, 20 000 pairs of gloves, 10 000 pieces of shoe protection arrived in Skopje on 19 April 2020.
- **Bulgaria donated** 100 protective suits and masks to the Ministry of Defense as a sign of solidarity in the fight against coronavirus 16 April 2020
- The Steiermärkische Sparkasse Group, through the two local banks Ohridska Banka and Sparkasse Bank Macedonia, jointly donated funds to support various segments of the health system in the total amount of 110,000 Euros. Ohridska Banka expressed their solidarity with the help of 1,500 socially disadvantaged families in cooperation with the Red Cross of the City of Skopje.. For the needs of the University Clinic for Infectious and Febrile Diseases in Skopje, they donated 54,000 Euros for the purchase of protective masks and suits, and for the maintenance and repair of existing medical equipment two mobile X-ray machines and the purchase of a vertical laminar chamber. As part of this donation, the Group has allocated funds to support the two general hospitals in Kumanovo and Ohrid, and provided fuel for 32 vehicles available for emergency medical care

- USAID and UNICEF have donated 2,350 packages of hygiene products for families of social risks for protection from the spreading of the coronavirus. Of these, 1,000 packages will be donated to families in Suto Orizari, Skopje, 500 in Trizla, Prilep, 500 in Bajro, Bitola, 250 in Keramidnica, Gostivar and 100 in Crnik, Delcevo.
- United States gave donation of personal protective equipment as a part of the continued support for North Macedonia. U.S. companies like Coca Cola, Microsoft and other are also offering assistance to North Macedonia in the COVID-19 crisis management, as announced by Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Western Balkans, Matthew Palmer.
- Czech Republic donation of one million masks arrived Skopje by a military plane from Prague.
- **China's** assistance for North Macedonia is expected by the end of April with protective gloves, hand and surface disinfectants in addition to 30 000 Euros provided yesterday to Ministry of Health.
- **Slovenia** provided 100,000 surgical masks and 100,000 protective masks.
- Norway has also donated medical supplies to North Macedonia (worth 180 000 Euro) which will be shipped from the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA). North Macedonia is currently using a field hospital donated by Norway, allowing it to double the capacity at the Infectious Disease Clinic.
- Sixteen applications have been picked out of more than 500 sent for the **CREATON public** call to tackle COVID-19 challenges, issued by the Fund for Innovations and Technology Development. The public call was supported by the Embassy of Switzerland to North Macedonia, USAID, UNDP, UNICEF, and the Chamber of Commerce for Information and Communication Technologies MASIT. Nearly 158 applications were shortlisted. Of those that made the cut, there are solutions involving medicine, digital tools as support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to weather the crisis, education digital tools, culture and leisure tools. The total budget is 10 million denars and each proposal can receive up to EUR 10,000 in local currency. The call is the first in a series of the Fund's initiatives to tackle with the COVID-19 consequences.
- Disabled and elderly persons will receive aid during the coronavirus crisis. This activity is accomplished with the UNDP and in cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.
- Government authorized the Minister of Health Venko Filipce to sign the Donation Agreement between the Information Technology Company Nextsen DOO as a Donor and the Ministry of Health as a recipient of the donation.
- British Embassy Donated Equipment to Defence Ministry: The Embassy of the United Kingdom to Macedonia handed over to the Defence Ministry a donation consisting of protective equipment for better handling of the coronavirus situation
- The **Hungarian government** donated 100,000 protective masks and 5,000 protective suits
- Turkey delivered a donation to North Macedonia to deal with the coronavirus on 8 April 2020. The Turkish donation consists of 50,000 protective medical masks, 1,000 protective suits, 1,000 diagnostic tests and other medical supplies.
- MOH Solidarity fund is established: Companies, individuals, organizations, institutions, embassies donated 59.3
 million denars on the account of the Ministry of Health including donations of medical devices, protective equipment
 and other materials.
- North Macedonia to receive urgent medical equipment with 4 million euros from EU for procurement through UNOPS.
- USAID supported both WHO and UNICEF with 1.1. million USD in their efforts to fight the epidemic in North Macedonia
- Germany offered support to the Ministry of Health with an amount of USD 2 million in PPE
- OSCE is proposing donation of essential PPE for the COVID19 Center of Infectious Diseases for 30,000 Euros.
- Packages with food and hygiene assets in the amount of 100.000 USD will be allocated to most jeopardized Roma families in Macedonia that are socially and economically hit by the health crisis, announced the Foundation Open Society – Macedonia which donated the funds.
- Macedonian Red Cross supports the elderly and the disabled in shopping and basic needs for hygiene, protection and their livelihood.

GAPS/NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

The most important priority at this point and in the next 3 months is to ensure that the health system can cope with increasing numbers of cases needing intensive management, protecting the health care workers and ensuring essential social and medical care to the vulnerable.

> Technical needs at the health front:

- Assess the socioeconomic impact on Health system during the crisis and after the crisis
- Determine the level of immunity to the virus in the population
- Review of the testing algorythms in consideration of the strategy to increase testing.
- Increase use of eHealth and telemedicine to improve and facilitate population preventive interventions
- Strengthen epidemiological capacity
- Enhance planning capacity for transition strategy after lockdown.

Critical needs:

- Laboratory Kits and reagents; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); Mechanical Ventilators/Respirators (respirators from operating rooms are not adapted to need of respiratory diseases and cannot be used for the ICU);
- intensifying risk communication;
- socioeconomic relief for vulnerable groups and employement protection.
- Maintaining Essential health and social services
- Protecting health care workers whether those working in the COVID-19 designated facilities or elsewhere countrywide because of the community transmission.
- Mental Heath Support to health workers and the public especially the vulnerable ones.

> Challenges:

- Procurement: Access to local or international supplies and mainly respirators for the critical needs identified because of international shortages.
- Shortage in health workforce as the situation progresses
- Ensuring sustainability of the health facilities and health care during and after the crisis.
- Outreach and social support to the vulnerable
- Ensuring continuity of treatment and access to regular health care for all citizens including the vulnerable groups with other diseases and pathologies.
- Fighting Isolation and scaling up community engagement in the regions
- Compliance of the citizens to instructions of the government and self-isolation

IMPORTANT CONTACTS NORTH MACEDONIA:

Call Center 0800 002 03; "Alo Doctor" 02 15 123

Useful Links
For symptoms related to COVID19
WHO Facebook/Twitter
CPH Bitola 071 261 330
CPH Veles 071 219 278
MoH Facebook/Twitter
CPH Gevgelija 071 219 278
CPH Gevgelija 071 219 278
Red Cross Kisela Voda 071 349
CPH Gevgelija 071 219 278

CPH Kochani 071 373 913

WHO Europe website for COVID-19

Red Cross Chair 070 208 383

Government's web page for all official COVID-19 related information (MKD/EN).

MoH COVID-19 information

NATO's Next-Generation Incidence Command System (NICS)

How to stay physically active during COVID-19 self-quarantine

<u>Q&A on COVID-19, pregnancy,</u> childbirth and breastfeeding

New WHO Global Campaign – "Pass the message: Five steps to kicking out coronavirus" with FIFA

CPH Kumanovo 070 215 851 CPH Ohrid 070 723 029 CPH Prilep 076 475 747 CPH Skopje 071 289 614 CPH Strumica 072 235 543 CPH Tetovo 075 240 464 RU Gostivar 076 365 161 CPH Shtip 078 365 613 IPH Skopje 078 387 194

Psychological support

-Self-isolated adults
072 919 009
-Citizens of municipalities Debar
and Center Zhupa
070 241 807
-adolescents and their parents
078 378 728
-parents of children with
disabilities 070291574
-Parents of preschool and school
children 072 912 676

Red Cross Karpos 071 349 230
Red Cross Gazi Baba
Team for support of homeless
people
Foreign Affairs
Regular line 075 446 647
Regular line, Viber and
WhatsApp:
070 282 078

[New] Call Center for the economic measures in response to COVID-19
02/324-8040

WHO WhatsApp messaging service
[New] Text hi to +41 79 893
1892
Text hi to +41 79 412 32 36