

# Critical Supply Chains Monitoring:

## Medicine availability assessment

September 2024 | Ukraine, Mykolaiv Region

### Context

Since 2022, the Mykolaiv Region in southern Ukraine has been severely impacted by the ongoing conflict, particularly due to its proximity to active frontlines and periods of occupation. Early in the war, several settlements in the region, including key urban and rural areas, were occupied for extended periods.<sup>1</sup> This resulted in the destruction of vital infrastructure, including healthcare facilities, pharmacies, and transportation networks, disrupting the delivery of essential services such as access to medicines.

The situation was further exacerbated by continued shelling and airstrikes, including those targeting health care infrastructure. As of March 2024, the number of partially damaged healthcare facilities in the Mykolaiv region reached 44, and 6 medical facilities had been completely destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

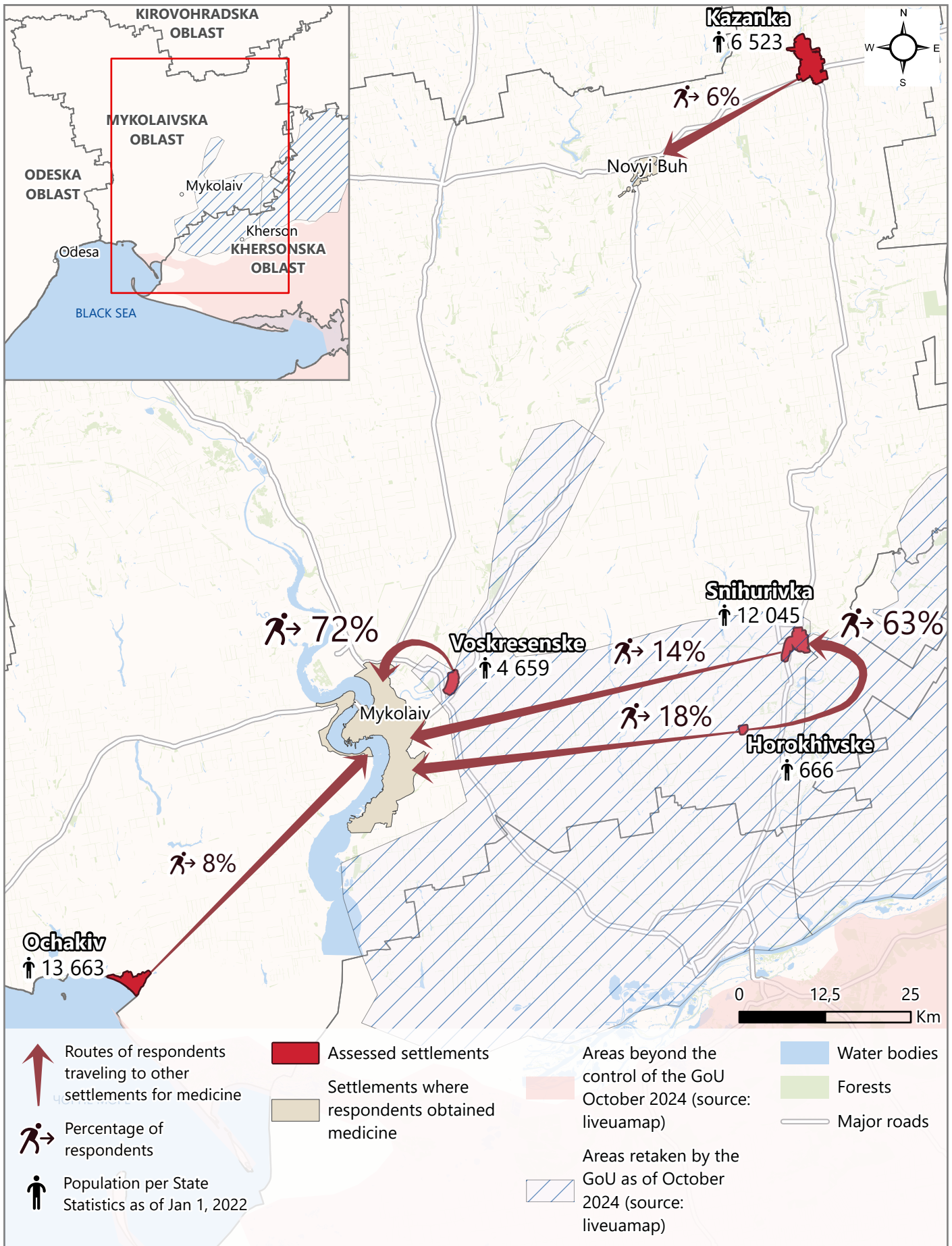
After many parts of the Mykolaiv Region were no longer occupied in late 2022, recovery efforts began, with support

from local authorities and international humanitarian organizations. Despite these efforts, the availability and accessibility of medicines remained a critical issue, especially in frontline and rural settlements. The destruction of roads and pharmacies, coupled with intermittent military activity, has hampered logistics and made it difficult for residents, particularly vulnerable populations such as the elderly and chronically ill, to access essential medications.

In September 2023, 12% of respondents in Mykolaiv region reported significant challenges in accessing medicines. The cost of medicines and their availability in pharmacies continued to be the primary barriers to accessing medicines.<sup>3</sup> Mobile medical teams were deployed to hard-to-reach areas, and donations of medical supplies, medicines, and equipment helped stabilize the situation. However, challenges persist in certain settlements, where pharmacies remain closed, and transport options are limited due to road damage.

### Key findings

- Stabilization of medicine access through humanitarian aid:** In areas like Snihurivka, Ochakiv, and Voskresenske, medicine availability has stabilized and, in some cases, returned to pre-war levels, primarily due to the influx of humanitarian aid and the active involvement of Health Cluster partners. However, this stability is reliant on continued humanitarian support, and reduction in aid could disrupt access to medicines, leaving vulnerable populations at risk.
- Main obstacles to accessing medications:** Respondents report that the biggest challenges they face when needing medication are the high costs and the unavailability of certain types of medicines.
- Challenges with transportation and infrastructure:** Residents in several areas, including Horokhivske and Voskresenske, are facing significant logistical challenges in accessing medicines due to damaged roads and limited transportation options. These issues make it difficult for them to travel to pharmacies or healthcare facilities, further complicating their ability to obtain essential medications.
- Widespread use of the "Affordable Medicines" program:** Across all settlements, many respondents reported using the "Affordable Medicines" program to access medications. However, in certain cases, such as in Voskresenske and Ochakiv, dissatisfaction with the quality of medicines received was highlighted by a notable portion of respondents.



Map 1. Assessed settlements with destinations and numbers of respondents seeking medicine in the Mykolaiv Region

## Rationale & Methodology

This assessment seeks to evaluate the current state of medicine availability across settlements in the Mykolaiv region, with a focus on frontline, de-occupied, and rural areas. By identifying settlements where access to medicines is limited and specifying the types of medicines affected, the assessment aims to support decision-making by the Health Cluster, humanitarian organizations, and local authorities. The findings will help inform the development of targeted interventions to restore and improve access to essential medicines, ensuring that vulnerable groups such as the elderly, those with chronic illnesses, and displaced persons receive the care they need.

Five settlements in the Mykolaiv region were selected through an analysis of REACH's Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) data and consultations with the Health Cluster team.<sup>4</sup> Since February 2022, three of these settlements—Snihurivka, Horokhivske, and Voskresenske—have been partially or fully under temporary military control by the Russian Federation.

Five interviews with heads of primary care centers, along with 223 households were conducted in chosen locations. Survey participants were identified through local referrals, with residents providing contact information for potential respondents. This approach created a respondent-driven sample, enabling the collection of contacts from people likely to rely on medication for chronic or life-threatening conditions to increase the likelihood that the household experienced a need to seek medication.

While the sample size and methodology mean that the results should be viewed as indicative rather than fully representative, the combination of patient and healthcare provider perspectives offers a well-rounded understanding of access to medicines in the targeted areas. The questionnaire consists primarily of quantitative questions, with a few open-ended ones to allow respondents to share additional opinions. Data collection took place between August 26 and September 9, 2024.

## Findings

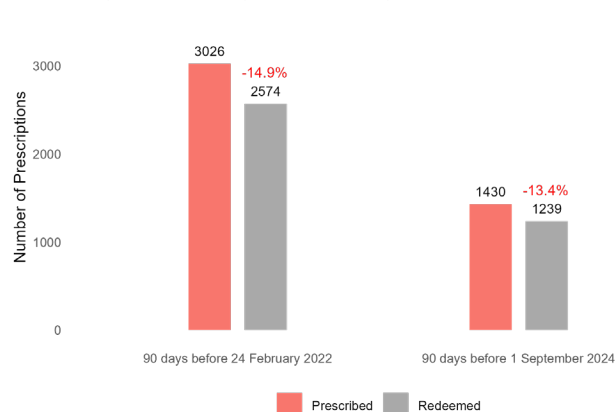
### Snihurivka

**Number of surveys: 50 + 1 KI**

**Average age of respondents: 59**

Snihurivka, a settlement in the southeastern part of the Mykolaiv region, is situated approximately 40 kilometers from the front line. As of early 2022, its population stood at 12,045 according to the State Statistics Service.<sup>5</sup> Despite experiencing eight months of temporary military control of the Russian Federation, the situation regarding access to medicines in Snihurivka is among the least concerning compared to other assessed settlements. Key informant (KI) indicates that the availability of medicines now mirrors the pre-invasion levels, largely due to humanitarian aid.

Comparison of Prescriptions and Redemptions: Snihurivka

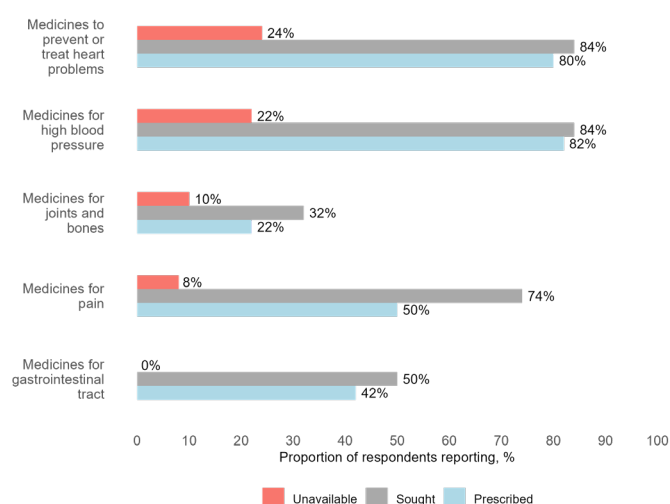


A survey of 49 household respondents highlighted the presence of pharmacies, with half reporting that medicines are also accessible through a healthcare facility. This is corroborated by data from the National Health Service

of Ukraine, which records seven pharmacies and one healthcare institution operating in Snihurivka. The active involvement of Health Cluster partners is noteworthy, as six organizations carried out activities in Snihurivka during July and August 2024. These activities included donations of medicines, medical equipment, and supplies, as well as primary healthcare services and psychological support.

While nearly half of the respondents (23) reported no issues in obtaining medications, 20 cited affordability as a challenge, and 15 mentioned the unavailability of specific medicines. Three respondents also noted difficulties related to disabilities, though KI emphasized that home visits by social or medical workers are available for those in need.

Medicines Sought, Prescribed, and Unavailable in Snihurivka



Transportation challenges were also raised, as respondents pointed to the significant deterioration of roads since the

exacerbation of the conflict, limiting access to transport and thus the ability to search for medicines outside the settlement. Ten respondents reported having to travel to other areas to obtain medications. However, it is worth noting that over the past two months, 35 respondents received medications through the "Affordable Medicines" program\*. Of all the respondents who used medicines in the last 2 months, only two expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the medicines they received.

\*The "Affordable Medicines" program provides patients in Ukraine with access to essential medications for chronic diseases through government-funded subsidies.

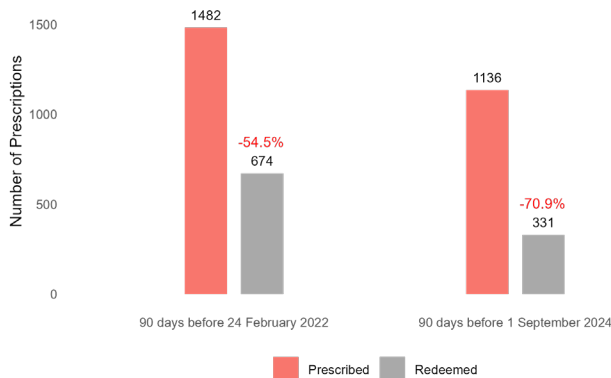
## Kazanka

Number of surveys: 34 + 1 KI

Average age of respondents: 48

Kazanka, a relatively small settlement located in the northeastern part of the Mykolaiv region, had a population of 6,523 as of early 2022.<sup>5</sup> According to KI, access to medicines in the settlement has not significantly worsened compared to the pre-war period, due in part to the availability of humanitarian aid. The most pressing issue in maintaining stable medical services and medication supply, as emphasized by KI, is funding, with a substantial portion of resources being allocated for fuel to power electricity generators.

Comparison of Prescriptions and Redemptions: Kazanka

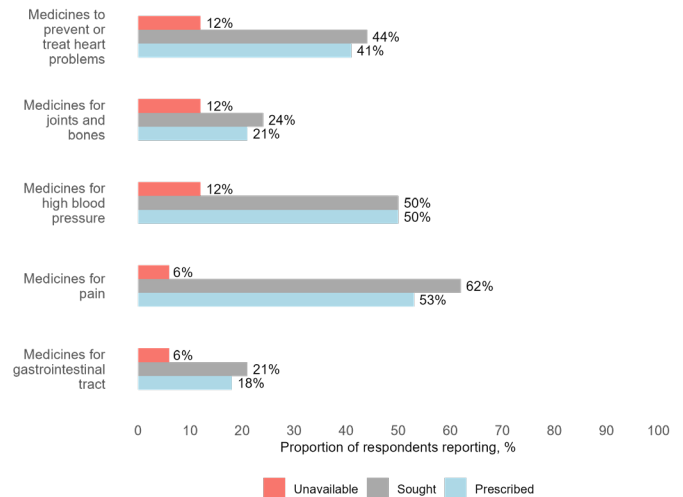


Of 34 respondents confirmed the presence of a functioning pharmacy in Kazanka, a finding that aligns with data from the National Health Service of Ukraine. Additionally, one respondent mentioned the ability to order medicines through the Ukrposhta service. KI corroborated this, noting that medication could also be accessed through the primary healthcare center or delivered during home visits by medical or social workers. ActivityInfo\*\* reported the involvement of one Health Cluster partner in Kazanka during July-August 2024, focusing on mental health and psychosocial support, with particular attention to building the capacity of healthcare providers to better serve vulnerable populations.

Of the household respondents, 21 indicated that they faced no obstacles in obtaining medications over the past

two months. However, seven mentioned that they could not afford the cost of medicines, and two respondents noted the unavailability of specific medications within the settlement. KI highlighted that the most significant challenge, especially for the elderly, is the high cost of medications.

Medicines Sought, Prescribed, and Unavailable in Kazanka



It is also important to note that 26 respondents reported utilizing the "Affordable Medicines" program over the past two months, with only one expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of the medicines received.

\*\* The ActivityInfo database is utilized for reporting partners' activities and progress toward targets for the humanitarian health response in Ukraine

## Horokhivske

Number of surveys: 40 + 1 KI

Average age of respondents: 59

Horokhivske, a small village in the southeastern part of the Mykolaiv region, lies 30 kilometers from the front line and has a population of 666 individuals.<sup>7</sup> Like much of the region, the village was under temporary military control of the Russian Federation for approximately eight months. Key informant reported that while the availability of medicines has stabilized, logistics remain disrupted due to significant road damage from ongoing hostilities.

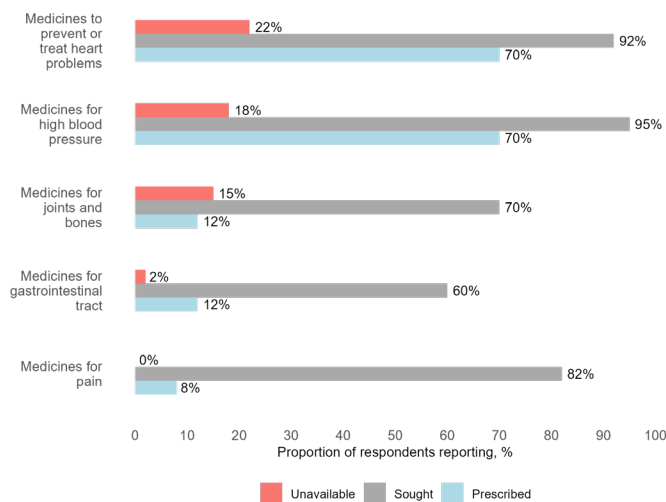
Residents of Horokhivske rely on the primary healthcare center in Snihurivka for medical services, as there are no such facilities within the village itself. Thirty-five respondents mentioned a small pharmacy kiosk at the outpatient clinic, although data from the National Health Service of Ukraine and KI confirm that there are no pharmacies in the settlement. ActivityInfo indicates that during July-August 2024, two Health Cluster partners operated in Horokhivske, deploying mobile and fixed medical teams to provide consultations, integrated primary healthcare, home visits, trauma stabilization, and referrals.

While 25 household respondents reported no obstacles in obtaining medicines, 10 noted a lack of transportation



to the nearest pharmacy, 10 found the cost of medicines prohibitive, and 5 could not locate specific medications. KI confirmed that the greatest challenge for residents, in the absence of local pharmacies, is transportation, with logistics in the area severely hampered. Despite these difficulties, 29 respondents reported that they had to travel to another settlement in the past two months to access medicines. Additionally, 28 respondents said they had to travel to obtain prescriptions within the same period.

Medicines Sought, Prescribed, and Unavailable in Horokhivske



It is worth noting that all 40 respondents utilized the "Affordable Medicines" program, although five expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the medicines received.

## Ochakiv

Number of surveys: 49 + 1 KI

Average age of respondents: 28

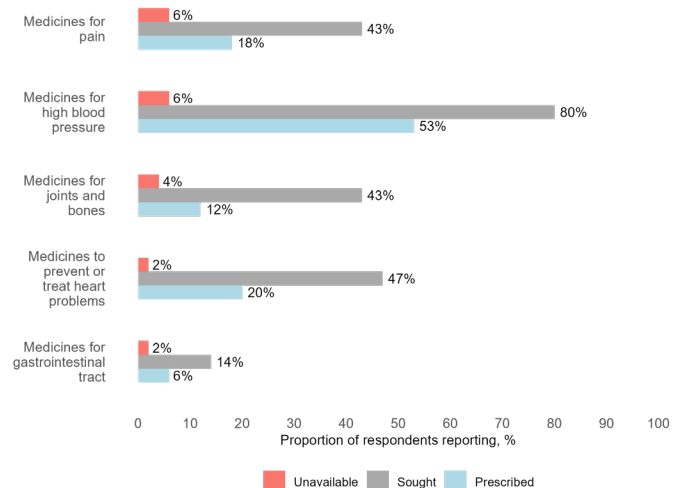
Ochakiv, a port city in the Mykolaiv region of southern Ukraine, is strategically located on the Black Sea coast at the mouth of the Dnipro-Bug estuary, just 5 kilometers from Russian-occupied territories. With a pre-war population of 13,663, Ochakiv is a relatively large settlement.<sup>5</sup> According to key informant, the availability of medicines has stabilized compared to the period before exacerbation of the conflict, and there are currently no significant obstacles to medicine procurement.

Comparison of Prescriptions and Redemptions: Ochakiv



Forty-four household respondents confirmed the presence of static pharmacies in the city, a fact corroborated by KI and the National Health Service of Ukraine. In addition to pharmacies, 29 respondents noted that medicines can also be obtained at the local clinic. Two respondents indicated awareness of the option for social worker home visits. ActivityInfo reports that a Health Cluster partner operated in Ochakiv during July-August, offering medical consultations and donating medicines, equipment, and supplies to local healthcare institutions.

Medicines Sought, Prescribed, and Unavailable in Ochakiv



While 34 respondents stated that they had not faced any issues in obtaining medicines, 6 reported that they could not afford them, and another 6 mentioned the unavailability of specific medications. Only 4 respondents needed to travel to another city to find particular medicines, and 14 indicated that they had accessed medicines through the "Affordable Medicines" program in Ochakiv.

However, it should be noted that 8 respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the medicines they received.

## Voskresenske

Number of surveys: 50 + 1 KI

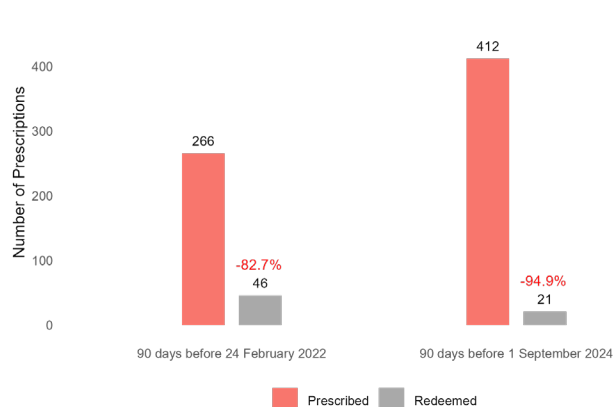
Average age of respondents: 65

Voskresenske, a relatively small settlement in central Mykolaiv region, had a population of 4,659 as of early 2022, according to the State Statistics Service.<sup>5</sup> Situated just 10 kilometers from the regional center, the settlement was under temporary military control of the Russian Federation in 2022. Key informant reported that access to medicines has improved compared to pre-war levels, largely due to the influx of humanitarian aid.

According to the National Health Service of Ukraine, there is a static pharmacy in Voskresenske, a fact confirmed by all 50 household respondents and corroborated by KI. Additionally, a mobile medical team operates in the settlement, and residents have the option to receive

medicines via home visits from social or medical workers. Five respondents also reported the availability of medicines at a healthcare facility. ActivityInfo indicates that a Health Cluster partner was active in Voskresenske during July-August 2024, offering medical consultations to the local population.

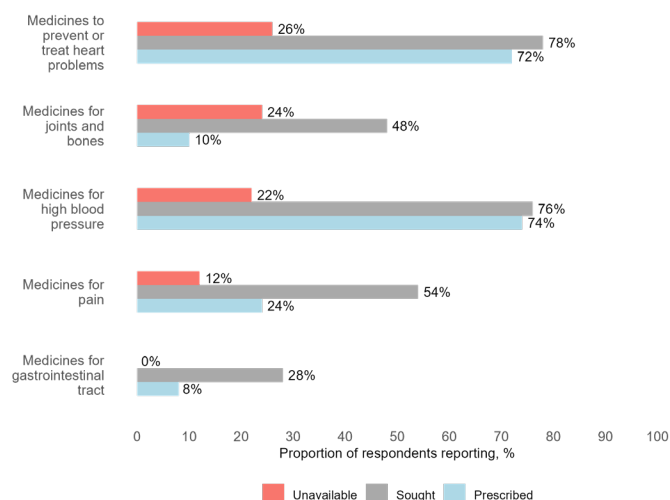
Comparison of Prescriptions and Redemptions: Voskresenske



Despite the presence of medical providers, a majority of respondents (32) reported difficulties in obtaining medicines. Twenty-six respondents reported being unable to afford the high cost of medicines, while 16 could not find specific types of medications. KI pointed out that the main challenges remain the destruction of both pharmacy

buildings and roads. Mobile medical centers, district paramedics, and humanitarian organizations have stepped in to help supply medicines. However, 36 respondents indicated they had to travel to the regional center to find necessary medical supplies, which, fortunately, is relatively nearby.

Medicines Sought, Prescribed, and Unavailable in Voskresenske



Over the past two months, 30 respondents reported using the "Affordable Medicines" program. It should be noted, however, that 15 individuals expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the medicines they received.

## Endnotes

1. OHCHR, **Human Rights Situation During The Russian Occupation Of Territory Of Ukraine And Its Aftermath**, March 2024
2. WHO, **HeRAMS Ukraine Status update report**, March 2024
3. WHO, **Frontline Oblast Needs Assessment: Factsheet based on the data collected in frontline areas of Dnipro, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Mykolayiv, Odesa, and Zaporizhzhya oblasts**, February 2024
4. REACH, **Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM)**, March 2024
5. STATISTICS UKRAINE, **Number of Present Population of Ukraine**, January 2022
6. [Analytical dashboards of the National Health Service of Ukraine](#)
7. [The official website of the Horohivska hromada](#)