

Right to Health and Access of Health Services

Belarus

Belarus pays great attention to the issues of ensuring a decent quality of life for older citizens, creating conditions for a healthy and safe life for older people.

The creation of such conditions, active longevity is legally enshrined in the **Law of Belarus dated 18 June 1993 "On Health Care"**.

The Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus dated December 3, 2020 approved the **National Strategy of the Republic of Belarus "Active Longevity - 2030"**. The strategy follows the principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – “Leaving no one behind” – and is linked to the achievement of almost all of the SDGs.

Measures are being taken to strengthen the increase in life expectancy of the population, including those aged 65 and over.

The strategic directions in this policy closely correspond to the main provisions of the Program for the Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025, the State Program "Health of the People and Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus" for 2021-2025, the State Program on Social Protection and Promotion of Employment of the Population for 2021-2025, the National Action Plan for the implementation in Belarus of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for 2017-2025.

One of the main indicators of population health is **life expectancy at birth**. Since 2000, this figure has been steadily growing and currently stands at 74.5 years (for men – 69.3 years, for women – 79.4 years). After reaching the age of 60, men live an average of 15.9 years, women 22.4 years. **Overcoming the gap in life expectancy between men and women** has been an important task of state programs in the field of health care and the country's demographic security for several years.

The increase in life expectancy was influenced by the improvement of medical care and its provision without age restrictions, as well as by the development of high-tech care and hospital-replacing technologies.

All types of medical care for elderly citizens are provided **free of charge**, certain categories of citizens have **preferential access to the medicines**, as well as technical means of social rehabilitation.

Elderly people are observed by general practitioners and, if necessary, by specialist doctors. Medical care for the elderly is part of the system of dynamic monitoring (medical examination) of citizens of Belarus.

According to the Ministry of Health of Belarus, at the beginning of 2022, more than 2 million citizens of retirement age were under supervision in healthcare organizations. During 2022, 96.3% of the elderly population was covered by medical examinations.

The national system of healthcare organizations ensures their maximum geographical accessibility for the elderly population – from republican scientific and practical centers providing high-tech types of medical care to feldsher-obstetric stations in underpopulated regions. For a more complete coverage of the population of underpopulated regions, mobile medical complexes are used.

Healthcare organizations organize palliative care for the disabled and lonely elderly citizens in hospices, palliative care departments, as well as in nursing care hospitals.

Considering the needs of elderly citizens, Belarus has taken a course towards **the creation of a geriatric service**. In 2017, the Republican Gerontological Center was created. There are 150 geriatric rooms in outpatient healthcare organizations to provide geriatric care to the elderly.

In 2022, 45 general practitioners and 300 physician assistants were **trained in the geriatric approach** at the Belarusian State Medical University. 514 doctors and 946 paramedical workers were trained at the workplace.

Information technologies are used to exchange information between health care organizations at all levels, to call a medical worker at home, to make an appointment with a doctor, and to provide a patient with access to their medical data, which improves the interaction between a doctor and a patient and improves access to health care.

Considering the needs of sedentary citizens, **various telemedicine consulting technologies are actively used**. Currently, this type of consultation is used in 262 healthcare organizations.

There are 581 “Third Age” Schools in healthcare organizations, where 98,720 people were trained in 2022. “Support and Care” Schools have been established to educate relatives, social workers, and caregivers of seriously ill patients in communication and organization of a therapeutic space at home. Taking into account the spread of COVID-19, an online learning format has been organized.

The healthcare system is actively working with public organizations and professional associations to promote the basic principles of healthy longevity, prevent geriatric syndromes, and educate patients on disease prevention.