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PRESERVATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE EDUCATIONAL CENTER "UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE"

The article is devoted to strengthening the focus of the research in public health policy and longevity. Preserving public health, that is, the health of the population is conveyed as one of the key factors to improve social policy in modern Ukraine: on the part of the state social policy of Ukraine, in recent years, an effective regulatory and legal framework has been established to preserve public health.

A significant focus of the research is in the concept that for the successful implementation of the planned changes in the humanitarian sphere, only the state's initiatives are not sufficient, and the partnership cooperation between civil society, authorities and educational institutions to strengthen public health and longevity is extremely important. A positive example of such cooperation is the Regional Center "University of the Third Age" in Mykolayiv directed to preserve a healthy lifestyle and longevity of the population and a range of factors that determine them.

Keywords: health, public health, social policy, regional center "University of the Third Age", medical reform, social work, social worker.

Research Actuality

One of the urgent issues of improving social policy in modern Ukraine is the preservation of public health, that is, the health of the population. As the main capital, the value of the nation is the population, human resources and only then the territory, subsoil, state institutions, economic resources. And in the context of complex processes of consolidation of Ukrainian society, the value of "health" can become one of the unifying national values in opposition to the spread of "disruptive" society of manipulative technologies of political, confessional, ethnic content.

This publication is dedicated to strengthening the focus of the research in public health policy and longevity. The use of the multidisciplinary method in this study is appropriate, since the health of the nation which is socio-political, spiritual, public health and longevity characterize the ability of the society and state to implement mechanisms for human capital preservation.

Analysis of Recent Sources and Publications

In modern literature, there are more than 100 definitions of the concept of health; their starting point is the definition given in the Statute of the World Health Organization: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being"¹.

"Public health" as a term was defined by the World Health Organization as a science and practice of preventing diseases, prolonging life and strengthening mental and physical health, working capacity through organized efforts of society, aimed at improving the environment, combating infectious diseases and illnesses, education of people for personal hygiene, organization of medical and nursing services for early diagnosis and preventive treatment of diseases, as well as for the development of public institutions to provide everybody with living conditions, which are necessary to strengthen health, to such an organization of all these benefits, so that every citizen can exercise his right to a quality life².

In today's conditions, the knowledge of objective patterns of public health formation, assessment of changes and trends taking place in this area becomes of special significance, as the development of society is determined by the existing and future nature of public health.

¹ *Статут 1946* (Всесвітня організація охорони здоров'я). *Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України*. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_599>. (2019, January, 25).

² *Статут, 1946* (Всесвітня організація охорони здоров'я). *Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України*. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_599>. (2019, January, 25).

We shall consider some of the approaches in the study of public health and longevity.

Social Gerontology as one of the global problems of the modern world determines the aging of the population. According to the classification of the World Health Organization, the elderly refers to the population aged 60 to 74 years old, the old – from 75 to 89 years, and the long-livers are 90 years old or older. Sociologists call these periods of human life "the third age", and demographers introduce the concept of "the third" (60-75 years old) and "the fourth" (more than 75 years old) ages. The solution of the problem of demographic aging requires the society to increase the financial costs and other material resources for servicing these age groups of the population. The society must take on the solution of all problems related to the complex of protection and social services and the provision of the elderly and the old. And thus, the formation of social policy must comply with the principle of social justice¹.

Thus, there is an urgent need for theoretical systematization, which would allow to justify the phenomenon of aging in all its aspects and the training of professionals capable of developing and executing state programs for the elderly and the old, and also to pursue a policy of social protection of people of this age category. This is what determines the relevance of the topic of this study.

Among the scholars, whose works are devoted to the old age person peculiarities is the well-known gerontologist V.V. Frolkis. He determined that everyone could easily identify the difference between the young and the old, but nobody can give a comprehensive scientific definition of the essence of aging and the mechanisms of its development². The English scientist A. Comfort emphasized that none of the hypotheses put forward was able to explain aging³.

Currently, there are more than 200 different theories of the aging process: the theory of wear, the theory of "life" energy loss in cells (M. Berger), the mathematical model of aging and the old age, intoxication theories of aging by

Ch. Bukhard, the theory of disharmony, the concept of the influence of biophysical factors on the genetic apparatus of cells and accumulation of radioactive substances. In addition to the aforementioned theories such as molecular, cellular and neurohumoral the aging mechanisms are also distinguished⁴.

Some modern ideas of futurists suggest that by 2050, in some developed countries, more than a third of the population will be people over 65 years old. It affects the economy and the organization of living space as well as the labor force. Many scholars see it as the problem, but perhaps it will simultaneously solve the problem of job destruction after the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In poor countries, there is another situation. There the number of people is increasing but the average life span of the population is dramatically decreasing. For example, in some countries, the average age of people by 2050 will be between 15 and 25 years old. These will be "countries of the teenagers" – inexperienced, unemployed, angry and poor population. Therefore, the Middle East and Africa will become sources of migrants in the future. With the preservation of such trends in the European Union, for example, in the future more than 35% of the population will be non-resident⁵.

Subject Matter Presentation

In current conditions, in order to raise the professional status, social work continues to deviate from its primary functions, when it could only compensate and follow the problems. In order to maintain faith in the profession, its functioning in a changing world, the profession of a social educator and a social worker must be at the forefront of social development, focusing on creating the optimal conditions for self-realization of each person. To accomplish this task, a new model for learning social work, as well as improving social policy, is needed.

On the part of the state social policy in Ukraine in recent years, an effective regulatory framework for public health has been established. This was approved by the Government on November 30, 2016, No. 1002, the Conception of the Development of the Public Health System in Ukraine and the Law of Ukraine "On State Financial Guarantees of Medical Care of the Population" No. 2168-VIII as of 10.19.2017.

¹ Кишкун, А.А. (2008). *Биологический возраст и старение: 8 возможностей определения и пути коррекции. Руководство для врачей.* Москва: ГЕОТАР-Медиа, 976.

² Фролькіс, В.В. (2017). Механізми старіння й продовження життя. *Практикуючий лікар*, 6, 2, 57-66.

³ Комфорт, А. (1967). *Биология старения.* Москва: Мир, 9.

⁴ Тарасюк, В.С., Андрієвський, І.Ю. (ред.) (2008). *Ріст і розвиток людини: підручник для студентів медичних вузів.* Київ: Медицина, 399.

⁵ Гаврилів, А., Кузнєцова, Т. (2012). Шпаринка у майбутнє: 7 прогнозів футурологів. *PRESUA*. <press.ua/shparynka_v_maybutnie_7_prognoziv_futurolo.pdf>. (2018, November, 19).

The adoption of the Concept for the Development of the Public Health System in Ukraine will help to create a unified public health system. This means that each head of the central and local executive body will take into account the consequences of his decisions for public health and give priority to measures that will help people avoid illness and injury.

The adoption of the document introduces the process of strategic planning of the system's development with the involvement of the interested parties and, planning of actions at the national, regional and local levels.

The concept lays the foundation for reorientation of the focus of the health care system from the treatment policy to the policy of strengthening and preserving health and preventing the diseases that every Ukrainian citizen will experience.

The approval of the Concept should contribute to the practical realization of the goals of preserving health and fulfilling lives of people as one of the most important goals of the world community, reflected in the principles of the European policy "Health 2020: the foundations of European policy in the support of the state and society actions for the sake of health and well-being" and in the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

The implementation of the Concept will give an impetus to the development of the public health system in Ukraine, including a comprehensive health care system reform¹.

According to the Law of Ukraine "On State Financial Guarantees of Medical Care of the Population", since January 2018, the reform of medicine has started. The Ministry of Health approved all the necessary documents for the implementation of the medical reform and drafted an approximate "plan of work". So, since April 2018, the system "money follows the patient" will start working.

That is, the salary of the primary care physicians or family doctors, district physicians and district pediatricians – will depend on the number of patients each of them serves, rather than on a fixed rate. The system will work the following way: each patient (or his parents) chooses a doctor to whom he wants to go for medical appointment. Together with the doctor in electronic form the patient concludes an uninterrupted electronic declaration of service.

The law provides that the state will pay in full amount receipts and a basic analysis package directly to the hospital where the patient is being treated. One doctor can serve a maximum of two thousand patients. The Ministry of Health has estimated that during 2018, this practice will bring annual revenue from 740 thousand UAH to 1 million UAH. Medical services will be divided into two packages: a red package is the services that the patient will pay for himself (for example, non-urgent dentistry, visiting a doctor without paper for admittance, aesthetic medicine); a green package includes the services that 100% will be paid by the state (urgent, primary and palliative care)².

For successful implementation of the planned changes in the humanitarian sphere, only the initiative of the state is not sufficient. Partnership cooperation between a civil society, a government and educational institutions is vital for the strengthening of public health and longevity. A positive example of such cooperation is the experience of the Regional Center "University of the Third Age" in Mykolayiv, the purpose of the University is to maintain a healthy lifestyle and longevity of the population and to sustain a range of factors that determine them.

The University of the Third Age in Mykolaiv which is the only one of such kind in the South of Ukraine, under the protection of the Saint St. Nicholas, was founded in 2011. The initiator of the University creation was the Social Work Department of the Mykolayiv National University named after V.O. Sukhomlynsky.

The previous scientific researches of the Social Work Department of the method to maintain the active life treatment of people of respectable age and generalization of the modern positive experience of adaptation of the older generation to the current challenges have found a logical embodiment in the creation of the University of the Third Age in Mykolayiv.

The origins of the creation of the University of Third Age, in addition to the scientific researches of the scholars, have been practical and positive results of the first years of the University's activities.

¹ Розпорядження про схвалення Концепції розвитку системи громадського здоров'я 2016 (Кабінет Міністрів України). Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України. <zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1002>. (2019, January, 25).

² Закон про державні фінансові гарантії медичного обслуговування населення України 2017 (Верховна Рада України). Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України. <<https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/startuvata-medichna-reforma-yakih-kardinalnih-zmin-chehati-2018-roku-1075060.html>>. (2019, January, 25).

The tutors and students of different departments participated as volunteers in the organization of the educational process of the University and training for pensioners was absolutely free. The curriculum was created with taking into account the interests and wishes of the students of the elderly age: Computer Literacy, Foreign Languages, Pedagogy, Psychology and Fine Arts. And the average age of "senior" students was 65 years old, among which there were also 82-year-olds.

The innovations in the care of the older generation in Mykolayiv became public, therefore those wishing to study at the University significantly increased in number. The editorial office of the local newspaper "Vechirniy Mykolaiv" got by post numerous inspired letters of the students grateful to the organizers for this remarkable institution, such as the following: "A low bow to everyone who helped to create this wonderful thing! Much thanks to those who have changed our life for the better!"

The successful implementation of the scientific idea helped scholars to convince the local authorities in their partnership cooperation with the further creation of the University of the Third Age as an Educational Center, registered in April 2014.

Thus, the partners were the Department of Labor and Social Protection of the Executive Committee of the Mykolaiv City Council, the Mykolayiv City Territorial Center for the Serving of Single and Disabled Citizens and the Scientific-Pedagogical and Central Library named after Kropivnitsky. From 2015, the tutors of the Mykolayiv National Agrarian University joined the University of the Third Age to support its activities.

The development of curricula and disciplines was improved and acquired modernized approaches as well as some practically applied characteristics. "Adult" students, in addition to mastering the courses of disciplines, showed their creativity in concert artistic programs and festivals. There is a new line of activities as fitness programs, which was an initiative form one of the students, the Master of Sports ready to provide coaching for other students of the University.

The popularity of the Educational Center has been covered in numerous publications in the media, thanks to the letters of the Authorities and the most important of them are the grateful students and graduates of the University, the total number of which has already reached 1,300 for 2018-2019 academic year only, who have become more educated and healthier citizens, active and competent in modern life.

Conclusions

The viewed in the article practice of introducing scientific ideas as in the case of the creation of the University of the Third Age Educational Center can be considered as a positive example of the partnership between civil society, authorities and educational institutions aiming to strengthen public health and longevity.

It is also important to conceive that in the political sphere, humanism takes its real effect through the definition of the social policy content. And social work as an important component of social policy is the practical work of social workers, which is happening in a complex, changing environment, and it is intended to give people the opportunity to develop their own potential as fully as possible, to prevent the occurrence of troubles, to enrich their lives, in particular, to promote the preservation of public health and longevity.

The experience of the University of the Third Age Educational Center in public health preservation is an example of a transition from a monologue to a dialog policy model, where the participants in the sociopolitical process represent the interests of a certain circle of people and they are able to discuss their needs, difficulties, advantages and disadvantages of taking that or another social and political decision in the sphere of social policy.

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