

MEDICAL VOLUNTEERING: THE PRESENT COURSE

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Volunteering is becoming an integral part of life of people of different age. Volunteers can currently be met in every sphere of life. The phenomenon of readiness to free aid is particularly evident in healthcare. Schoolchildren, students and young specialists participate in this process. The purpose of the article is to systematize and represent the modern stage of medical volunteering development as part of volunteer activities and social phenomenon that can be formed with the help of a favorable environment and measures of support at the state, industry-specific and regional levels. Volunteer activity can serve as a good tool of sanitary education of citizens and volunteers.

Keywords: volunteering, medical volunteering, public health, sanitary education

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МЕДИЦИНСКОЕ ДОБРОВОЛЬЧЕСТВО: СОВРЕМЕННОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ

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Добровольческая (волонтерская) деятельность становится неотъемлемой частью жизни людей совершенно разного возраста. Сейчас волонтеров можно встретить, пожалуй, в каждой сфере жизни общества. Особенно феномен готовности к безвозмездной помощи проявляется в сфере здравоохранения. Участниками этого процесса становятся школьники, студенты, молодые специалисты. Целью данной статьи являются систематизация и изложение современного этапа развития медицинского добровольчества как части добровольческой деятельности и социального феномена, формированию которого способствуют благоприятная среда и меры поддержки, создаваемые на государственном, отраслевом и региональном уровнях. Волонтерская деятельность может быть хорошим инструментом по санитарному просвещению граждан и самих волонтеров.

Ключевые слова: волонтерство, медицинское волонтерство, общественное здоровье, санитарное просвещение

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The Universal Declaration on Volunteering (issued during the XVI World Conference of the International Association of Volunteering Efforts (IAVE) in Amsterdam in 2001) states as follows: 'All people around the globe should be able to voluntarily devote their time, talent and energy to other people or their communities by means of individual or collective actions without expecting financial reward in return'.

By the beginning of the second decade of the XXI century, the total number of volunteers in Russia exceeded 1.5% of the total population [1].

Volunteering is widely spread around the globe. Its subject is free aid represented as execution of various works and/or services intended for all those in need [2]. The spectrum of volunteering is rather wide: from eventful volunteering during sports events to professional pro bono activity (from the Latin term 'pro bono publico' meaning 'for the public good'). Volunteering is an activity represented as free execution of various works and/or services in order to solve social tasks in education, healthcare, culture, social support and social services, physical culture and sports, environmental protection, prevention and mitigation of emergencies. Assistance in volunteering development and promotion is a priority guideline

of social and youth policy in accordance with the Concept of Volunteering Development in the Russian Federation until 2025 (approved by Government Resolution of the Russian Federation as of December 27, 2018 No. 2950-p) [3]. Establishment of medical volunteering is considered separately in this review.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Volunteering and medical volunteering regulatory acts, international research on participation of volunteers in healthcare, analysis of stages of medical volunteering establishment in Russia in the XXI century.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In recent years, a stable growth of citizens and various companies participating in volunteering has been observed.

As a result of labor force survey conducted by the Federal State Statistics Service, a steady increase in population aged 15 or older who participated in volunteering was observed in 2016–2020 [4]. Thus, a number of volunteers accounted for over 1.44 mln people in 2016, over 1.47 mln people in 2017,

over 1.53 mln people in 2018, over 1.79 mln people in 2019, and 2.03 mln people in 2020 (increased 1.4-fold than in 2016). The results of reviews held by the Public Opinion Foundation in 2020 showed a positive tendency to the increased number of citizens engaged in volunteering [5].

Thus, 23% of those reviewed consider themselves volunteers or former volunteers.

In 2019, the Government of the Russian Federation determined the procedure of functioning of the Unified Information System (Dobro.ru UIS) as far as volunteering goes, and rules of UIS interaction with other information systems [6]. Healthcare volunteering is developing in a particularly intensive way. Based on the open data taken from Dobro.ru UIS, 'Healthcare and Healthy Life Style' position holds the third most popular place among volunteers, and 208,378 people are involved in this activity via the portal (as of January 30, 2022).

Systemic and large-scale development of medical volunteering started in 2013 with the Sklif's Volunteers Project. President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin in his address to the Federal Assembly delivered as follows: 'We need to revive the traditions of charity. I suggest that we start a wide movement of volunteers in Russia who are ready to work in the health sector and afford all possible assistance' [7]. Then the project gained support and was over time transformed into the Medical Volunteer association. In 2016, the association was registered as the All-Russia Social Healthcare Movement of Medical Volunteers. Today, the voluntary organization provides a regular volunteer aid in 1,200 medical institutions with volunteers from 260 higher and secondary medical schools and schoolchildren from 1,900 educational institutions being involved.

In 2017, the Federal Center of Health Volunteering Support of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as the FCHVS of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation) was created by the Ministry of Health as an administration and organization resource to coordinate the work of authorities in health protection and their interaction with volunteering organizers and volunteer associations in Russia [8].

The goal of the work of the FCHVS of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation is to develop common approaches to building and work of volunteering movements, development, methodological support and promotion of volunteering initiatives, identification and dissemination of successful volunteering practices, and pooling of resources to solve problems and overcome barriers that arise during volunteering organization and implementation.

The system of medical volunteering in Russia includes as follows:

- Federal Center of volunteering and mentoring support of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation;
- All-Russia Public Movement of Medical Volunteers having departments in 85 regions on the basis of

medical universities, institutes and colleges (over 100,000 volunteers);

- network of employees responsible for support of health volunteering among regional healthcare authorities of constituent entities of the Russian Federation and responsible employees in medical organizations;
- other specialized interregional, regional and municipal non-commercial organizations, volunteering organizers.

The main directions of health protection volunteering include aid provided to medical personnel and patient care in medical organizations; sanitary education and prevention of socially significant diseases; popularization of a healthy way of life (improved health literacy); teaching population the skills of first aid; facilitating medical support during sports and public events; popularization of regular donorship of blood and its components; health care orientation for students. According to volunteers, participation in healthcare volunteering enables to develop specialized skills and competences, increase the level of professional leadership and provide assistance in developing effective communication with patients [9]. Thus, the obtained experience in volunteering can produce a direct influence on both overprofessional, and professional skills, and expand the circle of competencies. Guidelines on volunteering accounting for those entering the residency have been currently implemented in the country. This is an additional motivation for healthcare volunteers [10].

In Russia, creation of a favorable environment for medical volunteering is set in the Standard of health protection volunteering support in federal constituent entities of the Russian Federation developed by the FCHVS of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation in 2019 and implemented until today [11]. It includes regular and effective interaction of the employees responsible for volunteering development with the volunteering community aimed at subsequent development and strengthening of health protection volunteering in federal constituent entities of the Russian Federation, monitoring of volunteering environment, making a plan of medical volunteering development, regulatory support of medical volunteering in a region, consultative, information and methodological assistance, and resource support of volunteering regional organizers by federal constituent entities of the Russian Federation. The basic principle is represented by publicity and transparency. Annual rating of regional volunteering support is based on healthcare data taken from sites of government authorities of federal constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the level and multilateral format of healthcare volunteering development in the Russian Federation, it can be taken and used as a good tool of sanitary education of citizens and volunteers (during specialized volunteering).

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