



Northwest Syria, 24 February 2022 — A fruitful partnership between WHO and the Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (UOSSM) is further extending its health care support to the people of northwest Syria by initiating a telemedicine consultation service — the first of its kind in the Region — in collaboration with the Syrian Expatriates Medical Association (SEMA).

Due to the increasing numbers of people suffering from mental health problems in the conflict zone of northwest Syria, WHO and partner UOSSM began providing mental health tele-support in 2021. To date, over 1025 mental health tele-sessions have been offered to more than 310 patients by 4 mental health tele-workers and a psychiatrist. The services – available from 9am to 9pm, six days a week – address a growing demand, which has been greatly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In true community spirit and following the success of the mental health tele-sessions, 19 volunteer doctors began work through SEMA on the HRIS Telemedicine Platform, with the first pediatric tele-consultations taking place on 20 October 2021 in northwest Syria's Al-Ekhaa Hospital.

Supported by WHO and the Humanitarian Grand Challenges Organization, this initiative will dramatically reduce caseloads and increase shared expertise among programme users in an effort to help save lives, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme will be implemented in 3 different types of medical centres in northwest Syria: mental health, pediatrics, and critical care.

WHO and partner UOSSM continue to deliver health care support to the people of the conflict zone of Northwest Syria, where it is direly needed.

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**Wednesday 8th of May 2024 06:57:38 AM**