



**For Immediate Release**

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**APLA Praises Gov. Brown and Lawmakers for State Budget that Improves Access to PrEP and HIV Care**

*California's 2016-2017 state budget funds pre-exposure prophylaxis financial assistance program and expands access to ADAP and OA-HIPP*

(Los Angeles, CA; June 28, 2016)—APLA this week applauded Gov. Jerry Brown and the California Legislature for passing a state budget that will make PrEP more affordable and improve access to care for people living with HIV. California's 2016-2017 state budget:

- Establishes a PrEP financial assistance program, which will cover PrEP-related medical expenses for people accessing the medication with annual incomes below 500% of the federal poverty level
- Allows the Office of AIDS Health Insurance Premium Payment (OA-HIPP) program to cover insurance premiums and medical out-of-pocket costs for all eligible people living with HIV in California, including those with employer-based coverage
- Eliminates the cost-sharing requirement for people enrolled in the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) with annual incomes between 400 and 500% of the federal poverty level

APLA, in collaboration with other members of the California HIV Alliance, advocated aggressively for these changes. "We are extremely pleased with the funding for HIV care and PrEP that was included in this year's budget," said APLA Chief Executive Officer Craig E. Thompson. "In order for California to stop the spread of HIV, we must continue to increase funding for programs that help people living with HIV stay in care and achieve an undetectable viral load. We must also implement new programs that will help make PrEP accessible for everyone, regardless of ability to pay."

PrEP is an HIV prevention strategy in which HIV-negative individuals take a daily medication to reduce their risk of acquiring HIV. Although awareness and use of PrEP have been increasing, affordability is a major barrier to PrEP access. In fact, a 2015 survey by the California HIV/AIDS Research Program found that over half of gay and bisexual men felt they would not be able to afford PrEP.

The state budget does not include additional funding for the AIDS Waiver program, a program

that provides case management and wrap-around services to help low-income people living with HIV remain in their homes and avoid more costly institutional care. Provider reimbursement rates for the AIDS Waiver program were last increased 15 years ago and access to the program for people living with HIV has been severely limited. There are now only approximately two dozen agencies that administer the program statewide—down from 41 in 2008.

“We are disappointed that the Legislature has once again failed to provide funding to support some of the most fragile people living with HIV in California,” said Scott Singer, Director of Behavioral Health Services at APLA. “If reimbursement rates are not increased, more agencies will be forced to close their doors and people living with HIV will no longer have access to this vital program. We will continue working with the Legislature to ensure that this program is accessible for people living with HIV across the state.”

The budget also includes \$5 million for sexually transmitted disease prevention; \$3 million for drug overdose prevention; and \$1.4 million for hepatitis B and C prevention and treatment. Further details about the approved budget can be found [here](#).

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AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) was founded in 1983 and is one of the largest nonprofit HIV/AIDS service organizations in the United States. APLA provides bilingual support to more than 6,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Los Angeles County annually and leadership on HIV/AIDS-related policy and legislation. Additionally, APLA conducts behavioral research designed to inform the development of evidence-based interventions and assists health departments in evaluating their HIV/AIDS services to ensure the delivery of effective and quality programs. APLA also provides administrative and fiscal support to the Global Forum on Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSMGF), which promotes and advocates for the health and human rights of MSM internationally. APLA is proud to be a community-based, volunteer-supported organization with local, national, and global reach. For more information, please visit [apla.org](http://apla.org).

APLA Health & Wellness (APLAHW) provides primary medical and oral health care, behavioral health services, HIV testing, PrEP counseling and management of eligible clients, STD screening/treatment, and health education and HIV-prevention services, with a specific focus on low-income LGBT people of color living in Los Angeles County. APLAHW is a federally qualified health center that includes: the Gleicher/Chen Health Center in South Los Angeles; the Wilshire Dental Clinic downtown; the S. Mark Taper Foundation Dental Clinic in South Los Angeles; Behavioral Health Services at the David Geffen Center in Mid-City; and a mobile dental facility. APLA Health & Wellness serves more than 8,000 people each year. For more information, please visit [aplahw.org](http://aplahw.org).

