



For Immediate Release

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California Legislature Advances Landmark Bill to Increase Awareness of PrEP and PEP

Bill Co-Sponsored by AIDS Project Los Angeles and the Los Angeles LGBT Center Ensures HIV-Negative Individuals Receive Information about PrEP and PEP During HIV Post-Test Counseling

LOS ANGELES, April 20, 2016— Landmark legislation to boost awareness of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent HIV infection was approved by the California Assembly Health Committee yesterday and will advance to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Co-sponsored by the Los Angeles LGBT Center and AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) and introduced by Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson (D-Carson), AB 2640 would ensure high-risk HIV-negative individuals receive information about all methods that reduce the risk of contracting HIV, including PrEP and PEP, during HIV post-test counseling.

"PrEP and PEP are highly effective interventions that could dramatically reduce new HIV infections in the state, but many people are still unaware that these new prevention methods even exist," APLA CEO Craig E. Thompson said. "When someone receives an HIV-negative test result, they should also receive information about how to stay HIV-negative."

PrEP is an HIV prevention strategy in which HIV-negative individuals take a daily medication to reduce their risk of becoming infected. PrEP has been shown to be up to 99% effective at preventing HIV transmission. PEP involves taking anti-HIV medications as soon as possible after a potential exposure to reduce the risk of becoming HIV-positive. According to a 2015 survey of gay and bisexual men by the California HIV/AIDS Research Program, only 1 in 10 respondents had ever used PrEP and nearly 85% had never talked to their doctor about PrEP.

“Alarming, awareness of PrEP and PEP is particularly low for those most at risk of HIV infection in California: Black and Latino men who are gay or bisexual,” Los Angeles LGBT Center Medical Director Dr. Robert Bolan said. “This bill is a common sense approach to ensure people receive information about how to protect themselves. It will also encourage more open dialogue between medical providers and patients regarding sexual health.”

The West Hollywood City Council recently voted to require that the city’s contracted providers of HIV testing provide information about PrEP during pre- and/or post-test counseling. However, there is currently no statewide requirement to provide information about any HIV prevention methods, including PrEP and PEP, during HIV post-test counseling.

“It is estimated that 1 in 2 Black gay men and 1 in 4 Latino gay men will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime if infection rates continue to rise. This is unconscionable. Women of color and transgender individuals are also among the groups at greatest risk for HIV,” Assemblymember Gipson said. “We now have effective tools like PrEP and PEP that can help end the HIV epidemic, but that won’t happen unless people know about them. We must do more to make sure that people know about all of the tools available to protect themselves, especially PrEP and PEP.”

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About AIDS Project Los Angeles

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.

About the Los Angeles LGBT Center

Since 1969 the Los Angeles LGBT Center has cared for, championed and celebrated LGBT individuals and families in Los Angeles and beyond. Today the Center’s more than 550 employees provide services for more LGBT people than any other organization in the world, offering programs, services and global advocacy that span four broad categories: Health, Social Services and Housing, Culture and Education, Leadership and Advocacy. We are an unstoppable force in the fight against bigotry and the struggle to build a better world; a world in which LGBT people can be healthy, equal and complete members of society. Learn more at lalgbtcenter.org.