

October 19, 2015

Dear Colleague:

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the Public Health – Seattle & King County and Washington State Department of Health (DOH) HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Implementation Guidelines. The guidelines provide local guidance that define priority populations for PrEP, and are designed to complement the U.S. Public Health Service PrEP guidelines. The primary objective of these new local guidelines is to encourage medical providers to ask their patients about the gender of their sex partners, and to help providers identify which of their patients might most benefit from PrEP. Because close to 80% of all HIV infections in Washington State, including in King County, occur in men who have sex with men (MSM), MSM are the primary candidate population for PrEP use in our state.

Approximately 500 Washingtonians become newly infected with HIV every year. Although Washington has made significant progress in increasing the proportion of HIV-infected residents who are receiving effective HIV treatment and are virally suppressed, which reduces HIV transmission by 96%, we can do more to reduce the annual number of new HIV infections.

PrEP is an important new HIV prevention option. PrEP requires HIV uninfected persons at risk for acquiring HIV to take one pill a day to prevent infection. The medication currently approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration for PrEP is co-formulated emtricitabine/tenofovir (Truvada®). The pill can reduce the risk of HIV infection by up to 92 percent¹ when consistently taken as prescribed. PrEP complements other risk reduction options such as reducing the number of risk exposures, consistent use of condoms, and suppressing viral load through use of HIV medication among those who are HIV infected. This biomedical intervention will assist many persons for whom traditional risk reduction options may be insufficient.

With the advent of PrEP, we now have the opportunity to significantly lower the number of new infections in our state. DOH and Public Health Seattle & King County support the use of PrEP as a critical first-line intervention for individuals at greatest risk of HIV exposure. The attached guidelines are part of our state's effort to promote the effective use of PrEP in our area.

The addition of PrEP to the HIV prevention toolbox is a significant advancement in HIV prevention. Prescribing and monitoring patients on PrEP does not require a high level of specialization, and many primary care providers in Washington State are already providing PrEP.

¹ [CDC PrEP Fact Sheet, May 2014](#)

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PrEP medicine and clinical monitoring is covered by major private insurance programs, as well as Medicare and Medicaid. Financial assistance may be available to individuals seeking PrEP, whether they have insurance or not, through the Gilead [Truvada® for PrEP Medication Assistance Program](#), the [Patient Access Network Foundation](#), and the DOH [PrEP Drug Assistance Program](#).

In addition, there are several resources available to clinicians prescribing or considering prescribing PrEP:

- The PrEP Clinical Consultant telephone line at University of California San Francisco (855) 448-7737 or (855) HIV-PrEP is available Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. PST.
- The University of Washington [Northwest AIDS Education and Training Center](#) (NW AETC) offers free technical assistance and training related to PrEP and clinical practice. NW AETC can be reached by calling (206) 543-2704.

In an effort to ensure access to PrEP is available throughout the state, DOH and Public Health – Seattle & King County have developed [PrEP Medical Provider lists](#). The directories are updated regularly in order to provide up-to-date accurate information to clients interested in PrEP. If you would like to add yourself and/or your clinic as a PrEP provider in the directory, or have other PrEP Drug Assistance Program enrollment questions, please contact DOH at ask.eip@doh.wa.gov or (877) 376-9316.

As the agencies charged with coordinating programs, services, and activities in Washington State and Seattle-King County, we are committed to the expansion of PrEP availability. We will keep you informed of developments related to PrEP on an ongoing basis.

Sincerely,



Kathy Lofy, MD
State Health Officer
Washington State Department of Health



Matthew Golden, MD, MPH
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Public Health Seattle & King County